This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

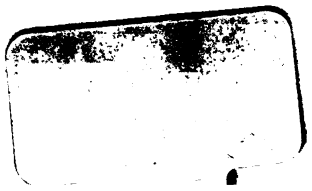
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

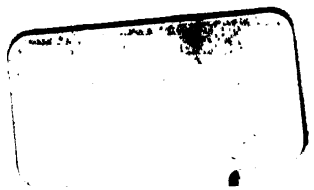
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



Hasbrouck



Hasbrouck

LA SALLE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK · BOSTON · CHICAGO · DALLAS
ATLANTA · SAN FRANCISCO

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
LONDON · BOMBAY · CALCUTTA
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN CO. OF CANADA, LTD.
TORONTO

LA SALLE

BY

LOUISE SEYMOUR HASBROUCK

NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1916

All rights reserved

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
780603
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 19 3 L

Copyright, 1916,
By THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped. Published September, 1916.

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

PREFACE

THE author makes little claim to originality in the following work, though the original sources of the history of the period have been carefully studied. Her aim has been, first and foremost, to give to younger readers what has hitherto been lacking — a short, yet not too short, account of La Salle's career, with details enough of contemporaneous history, scenery, manners, and customs to indicate the picturesque background against which La Salle's lonely figure moves in all the heroism of his magnificent journeys.

If the work of La Salle's matchless biographer, Francis Parkman, has been too freely quoted, the excellence of the quotations must be their own excuse. The writer also acknowledges her grateful indebtedness to the Pierre Margry publication of documents relating to La Salle; the Caxton Club reprints, edited by Melville B. Anderson; John Finley's "The French in the Heart of America," John G. Spear's "The History of the Mississippi Valley," Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi," and many other authorities, whose works have been frequently consulted.

Macmillan, Sept. 15/16.

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

FOREWORD

On the banks of the St. Joseph River, on the outskirts of the town of South Bend, Illinois, stands to-day an old red cedar tree,[1] which once had its roots in French soil. Push away the sand and earth near its base, and you will find on the tough bark the marks made by the broad-bladed axes of the early French explorers, probably La Salle's party, as they blazed the trail from the Great Lakes to the waters flowing to the Gulf, and claimed all that fair, unknown country for Louis the Fourteenth, "by the grace of God King of France and of Navarre."

Nearly two centuries and a half have passed. The tree that was once French has seen the passing of the red hunters and warriors, the savage allies of its nation; it looks no longer upon herds of buffalo, serves no longer as a landmark for daring explorer, wild *coureurs de bois*, gray-robed and black-robed missionary priests of Old Canada.

[1] Mentioned by John Finley, in "The French in the Heart of America."

Perhaps one day it felt a shiver around its roots and knew that the earth in which it stood had changed from French to English soil; and in another hour, years later, the sap may have stirred more strongly through all its branches with the lusty new life of its final owner — the United States of America.

Our civilization has grown like a mighty tree, whose branches spread over the people of many nations. But like the old cedar of St. Joseph, it still remembers the French explorers, and still carries near its heart the marks of their passage. As long as our Republic stands, our children should be taught what they owe to the French; and, in particular, what they owe to the most heroic of all Frenchmen in America — the one who followed the portage by the old cedar on the way to open to France, and through France, to all of us, the wonderful valley of the Mississippi — René Robert Cavelier de La Salle.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

LA SALLE'S ADVENTURES BEGIN 1

CHAPTER II

EARLY EXPLORATIONS 15

CHAPTER III

TWO FRUITLESS EXPEDITIONS 22

CHAPTER IV

MARQUETTE AND JOLIET 35

CHAPTER V

FRONTENAC AND LA SALLE 42

CHAPTER VI

BUILDING THE *GRIFFIN* 53

CHAPTER VII

PAGE

From Niagara to the Illinois 63

CHAPTER VIII

"Fort Heartbreak" 85

CHAPTER IX

A Terrible Journey 100

CHAPTER X

The Search for Tonty 108

CHAPTER XI

Tonty and the Iroquois 120

CHAPTER XII

La Salle's Oration to the Indians . . . 132

CHAPTER XIII

The Adventures of Father Hennepin . . . 139

CHAPTER XIV

PAGE
SUCCESS AT LAST 153

CHAPTER XV

GREATER PLANS FOR THE FUTURE 168

CHAPTER XVI

DISASTER AND DEATH 184

CHAPTER XVII

LA SALLE COMES TO HIS OWN 203

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
PORTRAIT OF LA SALLE	*Frontispiece*
NIAGARA FALLS	56
"STARVED ROCK"	102
OLD FRENCH MILL AT LACHINE	134
LEADEN PLATE BURIED BY THE FRENCH . . .	160
RUINS OF LA SALLE'S HOME	200

LA SALLE

CHAPTER I

La Salle's Adventures Begin

René Robert Cavelier, who afterwards took the name of La Salle from that of an estate belonging to his family, was born in Rouen, France, in 1643. He was the younger son of a wealthy family of merchants, and being a lad of unusual promise, was destined by his relatives for the priesthood. He did, in fact, take the first steps toward becoming a Jesuit priest, but soon found the rules and regulations of this order little to his liking, and left it after his father's death, which occurred when La Salle was about twenty-one.

His parting from the Jesuits was not strange, for he was not by nature fitted for the life of dependence and submission to others, imposed upon all who entered their priesthood. From what we know of him as a man, we may guess that he was a proud, reserved boy — handsome, if the supposed portrait

of him is genuine — with a temper like a flame, and a will like cold steel — a boy who led both in studies and sports — who was admired by many — hated by some — and loved by a few. Though in after life he showed a pronounced dislike of the Jesuits, he is said to have left the order on good terms with its members, and with an excellent record both in scholarship and behavior.

Probably his early connection with the Jesuits gave La Salle the idea which was to be the ruling one of his career — that of exploration in Canada — for at the time that he was in their school, the Society of the Jesuits was publishing yearly a series of fascinating volumes called "Jesuit Relations," which described the adventures of these priests in Canada so vividly, with so many details of the strange life in the forests of North America, of the Indians and their customs, of priestly heroism, sufferings, and adventure, that people of all classes of society, lords and ladies, merchants, and, needless to say, the Jesuits themselves, looked for the successive numbers more eagerly than we of to-day look for the next installment of some absorbing serial story in a magazine. La Salle must have read these, and the fact that he had an elder brother, a priest in another order, the Sulpitians, in Canada in the frontier village of Montreal, gave them a

special interest. At any rate, soon after leaving the Jesuits, he announced his intention of going to Canada.

The carrying out of this intention was considerably delayed by the fact that he had no money, having forfeited, on account of his connection with a religious order, the inheritance which would otherwise have been due him from his father's estate. His family, however, came to the rescue and gave him a considerable sum — not very large, since the income from it was reckoned only at four hundred livres[1] a year, but enough to pay his passage to Canada and to provide for his settlement in the new land.

In the spring of 1666, being then twenty-three years old, he said good-by to his native town of Rouen and took passage in a sailing vessel bound for the rocky citadel of Quebec. We see him next in Montreal, where the corporation of Sulpitian[2] priests, to which his brother belonged, were owners of the town. They granted La Salle a tract of land nine miles above them, at a spot most favorable for

[1] About eighty dollars. A livre was an old French coin worth about as much as a modern franc — twenty cents.

[2] The Sulpitians were a society of priests founded in 1641 by Jean Jacques Olier to educate candidates for the priesthood. They came to Canada in 1642, and founded Montreal as a Christian colony. They still conduct the Seminary there.

the fur-trade and also very much exposed to Indian attacks. This tract of land, or seigniory, called by La Salle "St. Sulpice," after the givers, lay on the bank of the St. Lawrence River, above the long and dangerous rapids known as Lachine — a name given them in La Salle's time for reasons which will appear.

Now began for La Salle a period of twenty-one years spent almost entirely in the forests and plains of North America — years that were marked by every kind of hardy adventure, danger, and suffering, and devoted to ceaseless and almost incredible journeys. After several preliminary trips to the edge of the Mississippi Basin, this man was actually, on three separate occasions, to lead large expeditions on foot or by canoe (only once by sailing vessel) over the thousand and more miles going and coming from Canada to various points in the Mississippi Valley; and he was to end his career in a gallant attempt to reach Canada from the Texas region. Those twenty-one years, the discoveries made in them, and the spirit and courage of the discoverer, have made La Salle one of the most notable figures in early American history, and one whose life should be familiar to every one.

To quote a traveler of that period, the Canada that La Salle came to was a land of "barbarians,

bears, and beavers." There were only three small villages and about twenty-five hundred inhabitants in the colony, from the fishing settlements of Newfoundland to the fur-trader's huts at Mackinac, or Michillimackinac, as it was then called. To be sure, the inhabitants were not all barbarians, for they included priests and nuns of gentle birth and breeding, and officers trained in all the graces of the most polished court in Europe — that of Louis XIV; but there were barbarous Indians aplenty, bears aplenty, and such quantities of beavers that the trade in their skins formed almost the whole support of the colony.

Except for these profits from the fur-trade, which were jealously guarded by those in power, there was little temptation in those days to emigrate to New France, as Canada was then called. The French king, Louis XIV, ruled the colony from overseas with such a strict hand that there was no opportunity for it to become prosperous by its own efforts, as the neglected New England colonies did. There were laws for everything and everybody. For instance, none but Roman Catholics might enter the colony — the Huguenots, the best settlers it could have had, being forbidden to come in under pain of death. The Canadians had to marry at a certain age, or suffer heavy fines and penalties.

They were forbidden to go into the woods to trade without a license. They could trade with France for three months in the year only, and with other colonies not at all. They were commanded to sell their beaver skins at an arbitrary price, no matter whether they were worth that price or not. Farmers were forbidden to move to the cities to live; colonists were forbidden to go home to France — and so on. What the king neglected to provide for, the "intendant," or king's agent, and the priests settled.

"The ordinances of the intendant," says Parkman, "were usually read to the people at the doors of churches after mass, or sometimes by the curé from his pulpit. They relate to a great variety of subjects — regulations of inns and markets, poaching, preservation of game, sale of brandy, rent of pews, stray hogs, mad dogs, tithes, matrimonial quarrels, fast driving, wards and guardians, weights and measures, nuisances, value of coinage, trespass on lands, building churches, observance of Sunday," etc., etc.

"If a curé with one of his parishioners reported that his church or his house needed repair or rebuilding, the intendant issued an ordinance requiring all the inhabitants of the parish, both those who have consented, and those who have

not consented, to contribute materials and labor, on pain of fine or other penalty. . . . If children were left fatherless, the intendant ordered the curé of the parish to assemble their relatives or friends for the choice of a guardian. . . . Chimney-sweeping having been neglected at Quebec, the intendant commands all householders promptly to do their duty in this respect, and at the same time fixes the pay of the sweep at six sous a chimney."

The priests were equally busy. A young officer quartered in Montreal in 1691, twenty-five years after La Salle arrived there, writes: "During a part of the winter I was hunting with the Algonquins; the rest of it I spent here very disagreeably. One can neither go on a pleasure party, nor play a game of cards, nor visit the ladies, without the curé knowing about it and preaching about it publicly from his pulpit. . . . They prohibit and burn all but books of devotion. . . . A curé of this town came to the house where I lived, and finding some books on my table, presently pounced on the romance of Petronius, which I valued more than my life because it was not mutilated. He tore out almost all the leaves."

The French settlers governed by these harsh rules and regulations were for the most part indolent, careless, and happy-go-lucky. They

worked as little as possible; it is said that at one time they kept so many feast days and holidays that there only remained ninety working days in the whole year. Naturally they were poor, but they were content with little. "A poor man," writes Mother Mary, a nun of the period, "will have eight children or more, who run about in winter with bare heads and bare feet, and a little jacket on their backs, live on nothing but bread and eels, and on that grow fat and stout."

But there was one point on which the *habitants*, or French peasants, and the seigniors alike defied the authorities, and that was in carrying on the fur-trade in the woods. Though they were supposed to trade only with the Indians who came to the Lower St. Lawrence twice a year, the greater number of the young men of the colony took to the forests and, far beyond the limits of the settlements, they exchanged hatchets and brandy for furs. The men who did this were called "*coureurs de bois*," literally, "runners-of-the-woods." As might be expected, they were a wild, unruly lot, almost as savage as the Indians themselves.

"It was a curious scene," says Parkman, "when a party of *coureurs de bois* returned from their rovings. Montreal was their harboring place, and they conducted themselves much like the crew of a

man-of-war, paid off after a long voyage. As long as their beaver skins lasted, they set no bounds to their riot. Every house in the place, we are told, was turned into a drinking shop. The new-comers were bedizened with a strange mixture of French and Indian finery. . . . The clamor of tongues was prodigious, and gambling and drinking filled the day and the night. When at last they were sober again they sought absolution for their sins; nor could the priests venture to bear too hard on their unruly penitents, lest they should break wholly with the church and dispense henceforth with her sacraments."

This paints the *coureur de bois* in dark colors, but he had his good side. The best of them, men like Nicollet, Iberville, and Du Lhut (from whom our city of Duluth takes its name) did valuable service in exploring, prospecting for mines, treating with the Indians, or building forts; and even the worst had a certain rash courage and "reckless, thoughtless gayety," which endear them to the lover of the picturesque in history.

At the time La Salle came to Montreal, the colony had been suffering greatly from Iroquois attacks. These "magnificent savages" formed a confederacy of Five (afterwards Six) Nations, who had their villages in what is now New York State,

principally along the banks of the Mohawk River. Here they cultivated their rude crops, corn, beans and pumpkins, and discussed in endless powwows by council fires the policies that had earned for them their superior position as strategists and indomitable warriors. Owing to their courage, wiliness, and pitiless ferocity, they had seldom, or never, been defeated since Champlain, in 1608, led a war-party of Algonquin Indians against them, winning a victory by the use of firearms, which the Iroquois had never before seen. Since that time, the Indians had been provided with guns by the Dutch traders at Albany, and on account of this advantage, and their superior ability, they had in a few years almost exterminated their enemies the Hurons and Algonquins, extended their conquests as far as the Eskimo on Hudson's Bay, penetrated into Canada, and murdered Canadian settlers under the very walls of Montreal, Three Rivers, and Quebec.

"The whole region between the St. Lawrence and the Laurentian mountains, the Saguenay River and Lake Huron, was, in 1654, left to the undisturbed possession of the furry and feathered animals, save only as Iroquois bands continually prowled to and fro along the streams. So complete had been the disaster wrought by the Iroquois —

so terrified were the Indians of all other tribes — that during the year 1653 not a single skin was brought to Montreal, and 'in the Quebec warehouse there was nothing but poverty.'"

During this time a settler who tilled his fields without armed men guarding him took his life in his hands. The Iroquois attacks were always sudden, and at any hour of the day or night their warriors might be worming their way through the tall grass, lurking behind trees, or stealing down the rivers in silent canoes.

Finally Louis XIV came to the rescue of his distressed colonists by sending over to protect them a fine body of French soldiers, called the Carignan regiment. Under their officer, Tracy, these veterans of European battles, who appeared to take by instinct to forest warfare, marched in the winter into the very heart of the Iroquois country and burned the villages, which they found deserted by the scared savages. For several years thereafter Canada was free from their attacks; but this peace was only a breathing spell, and at any time war might break out anew.

During this interval, the young La Salle undertook the clearing and settlement of his new domain, which was in the position of greatest danger because it was the furthest advanced of any of the settle-

ments. Lack of courage was not one of La Salle's failings. He was not only fearless himself, but managed to inspire others with confidence. Settlers were necessary to help him clear his land; and he appears to have had no trouble in persuading some of the *habitants* to take up land in small strips and build huts within a village which he laid out and protected by palisades. La Salle and his successors received this seigniory free on condition of paying to the proprietors, the priests of St. Sulpice, a small silver medal at each change of ownership. The settlers, on their side, secured their land without other payment than a yearly present to the seignior of three fat chickens, and about half a sou (half a cent) in money. This was the way many seigniories were founded in Canada in those times. It was the feudal system in theory, but it was free from the hardships which were a part of that system in Europe.

La Salle now had every chance of becoming a rich man. With characteristic boldness he had pushed forward into the woods where other fur-traders dared not go, and had consequently secured the first chance at the rich harvest of furs. His seigniory was at the foot of a long stretch of still water, a place most convenient for Indians to land before they undertook the descent of the rapids.

It was but a step from the Ottawa River, another trade route for the Indians and *coureurs de bois*. Notwithstanding the dangers of La Salle's position, the other traders envied him, and the jealousy thus begun increased until it became a source of bitter trouble to him in his subsequent career.

The young seignior's mind dwelt less on profit than the jealous traders thought. "From the shore of his seigniory, he could gaze westward over the broad breast of the Lake of St. Louis, bounded by the dim forests of Chateaugay and Beauharnois; but his thoughts flew far beyond, across the wild and lonely world that stretched towards the sunset."

His first concern when he came to Canada was to learn the Indian languages. It is said that in two or three years he had picked up the Iroquois tongue and seven or eight other dialects. He was able, therefore, to talk with some Senecas [1] who spent the winter of 1668 with him at his seigniory.

From these dusky guests, only a short time ago enemies, but since the Iroquois peace professedly friends, he learned things which fired his imagination. There was a river, they told him, which rose near their country — they lived in the neigh-

[1] The Senecas, Oneidas, Mohawks, Cayugas and Onondagas formed the five tribes of the Iroquois confederacy.

borhood of Onondaga — and flowed toward the setting sun, emptying at last into a great sea eight or nine months' journey distant. It was called the Ohio, or Beautiful River. Other Indians from the region of Lake Superior told him a similar tale. Their river was called Missi-Sepe, "the Great Water," and flowed south. La Salle thought that these two must be the same, or must join each other. Like other explorers of his time, his mind dwelt on the thought of a western passage to China through America; and he concluded that this river would give him one by emptying into the Gulf of California, or "Vermilion Sea."

To explore this wonderful river to its mouth — to open up new routes of trade for France to the riches of the Orient — this was the dream which inspired him, and made even the pioneer life at St. Sulpice seem tame by comparison.

CHAPTER II

Early Explorations

We will leave La Salle conferring with his Indian guests, and glance for a moment at what had already been accomplished in the discovery of the West. More than a hundred years before, in 1541, the Spaniard De Soto had reached the mouth of the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico, had died, and his body had been sunk secretly in the river by his followers, so that the Indians whom he had abused would not know that the "white god" was mortal. The Spaniards who survived him were glad to leave forever the shores where they had hoped to find El Dorado, and had been smitten instead with well-deserved misery. The Spanish nation made no use of the discovery,[1]

[1] "De Soto merely glimpsed the river, then died and was buried in it by his priests and soldiers. One would expect the priests and the soldiers to multiply the river's dimensions by ten — the Spanish custom of the day — and thus move other adventurers to go at once and explore it. On the contrary, their narratives, when they reached home, did not excite that amount of curiosity. The Mississippi was left unvisited by whites during a

and on early Spanish maps the Mississippi is not distinguishable from other streams flowing into the Gulf.

In 1608 Samuel de Champlain planted a colony on the rock of Quebec, and soon after sent into the forests the first *coureur de bois*, Etienne Brulé, whom he gave to the Algonquins as a pledge of friendship after their victory, so disastrous in its consequences, over the Iroquois. Brulé, like all his successors, took to the Indian life like a duck to water. He learned their language, painted his face and body, went on the warpath with them, and followed their customs in all respects. But he remained true to the French at heart, and acted "as interpreter and ambassador to the Indians for the benefit of his country-men." He is thought

term of years which seems incredible in our energetic days. One may 'sense' the interval to his mind, after a fashion, by dividing it up this way: after De Soto glimpsed the river, a fraction short of a quarter of a century elapsed, and then Shakespeare was born; lived a trifle more than half a century, then died; and when he had been in his grave considerably more than half a century, the *second* white man saw the Mississippi. In our day we don't allow a hundred and thirty years to elapse between glimpses of a marvel. If somebody should discover a creek in the county next to the one that the North Pole is in, Europe and America would start fifteen costly expeditions thither; one to explore the creek, and the other fourteen to hunt for each other." Mark Twain, "Life on the Mississippi," page 6.

to have reached the region of Lake Superior, for he discovered a great lake on whose shores were nuggets of copper, one of which he brought to Quebec to prove his story. "He might have accomplished more," says a historian of the Mississippi Valley, "for his enterprise was praiseworthy, but he got in trouble with some Hurons, east of Lake Huron . . . and they killed and ate him."

In spite of the untimely death of this first American bushranger, the advantage of having such men to penetrate the woods for the French was obvious. Champlain next sent, in 1618, a more notable explorer — a young man by the name of Jean Nicollet. For nine years he lived in the country east of Lake Huron with a tribe called the Nippissings, "undergoing such fatigues as none but eye-witnesses can conceive; he often passed seven or eight days without food, and once, full seven weeks with no other nourishment than a little bark from the trees." He had there "his own separate cabin and household, and fishing and trading for himself." Of course he became a complete savage in nearly all respects, but, strange to say, he returned to civilization every once in a while to attend church.

The Nippissings told Nicollet many tales of a

people "without hair or beard, who came from the West to trade with a tribe beyond the Great Lakes." These people traveled in wooden canoes that were much larger and heavier than the small frail ones of birch-bark used by the Indians known to Nicollet. He and the French to whom he told these stories, believed that the strangers were the Chinese or Japanese, come from oversea in wooden ships. When Nicollet was sent as ambassador to the country to which the unfamiliar traders came, he carried with him a Chinese robe, of "damask, embroidered with flowers and birds of many colors," in order to make a good impression on the strangers.

Accompanied by seven Huron Indians, he went to the Sault[1] Ste. Marie and then to Green Bay on Lake Michigan. Here lived a very numerous tribe of Indians, the Winnebagoes. Nicollet sent one of the Hurons on ahead to announce his coming, and a throng of four or five thousand men quickly gathered from the neighboring villages. Nicollet was disappointed to find no Chinese or Japanese. They were all Indians. Nevertheless, he put on his gay embroidered robe, took a pistol in each hand, and, approaching the crowd, gravely fired off blank cartridges. "The squaws and children fled screaming," but the warriors were delighted,

[1] Pronounced Soo.

and gave him a feast at which one hundred and twenty beavers were eaten.

Nicollet proceeded from there to the Fox River, and after paddling his canoe up the narrow channel, winding through fields of wild rice, abandoned the channel for the short portage which at this point leads from the valley watered by the streams flowing into the Gulf of St. Lawrence to that drained by the unknown, southward-flowing river. He saw plenty of red men, but not one of yellow complexion. From the Mascouten Indians of the neighborhood he learned that the "strange people" were not Asiatics, but Nadaissoux, or Sioux, who lived on a "great water" three days' journey from where he was, and who used wooden canoes dug out of great logs. Nicollet thought that the "great water" meant the sea, but in all probability it was the Mississippi into which the Wisconsin flows.

In 1641 the Jesuit priests, Jogues and Raymbault, established a mission to the Hurons at the outlet of Lake Superior. Soon after began the Iroquois war, which exterminated most of the Hurons, drove the rest of the miserable creatures out of their country in the Ottawa and Great Lake region, and undid all the painstaking work of the Jesuits. All the northern country from Mon-

treal to the Sault Ste. Marie was haunted by marauding Iroquois; but long before peace was declared, two engaging rascals, Grosseilliers and Radisson, *coureurs de bois*, had the courage to venture into the dangerous regions by the route of the Ottawa River. They paddled away from Montreal in August, 1654, while their friends shook their heads and prophesied that they would never return. A year passed, and the prophecies appeared justified. Another summer came, and lo and behold, the two wanderers, whom everybody had given up for dead, returned unharmed, with the substantial accompaniment of fifty canoes laden with furs and manned by seven hundred Indians, many of them from the far West!

Here was a surprise indeed. During their two years' wanderings they had reached the country beyond Lake Superior, and had gone from there westward till they reached, Radisson said, the Forked River, so called "because it has two branches, the one towards the west, the other towards the south, which, we believe, runs towards Mexico." There is little reason to doubt that this river was the Mississippi, with its branch, the Missouri.

In 1662, the aged Jesuit priest, Menard, tried to establish a mission in what is now northern Wis-

consin, but lost his way in the swamps and either died from exposure and starvation or was killed by Indians. Only his cassock, breviary, and kettle were recovered.

Eight years later two more Jesuit fathers, Allouez and Dablon, made their way up the rapids of the Fox River, in northern Wisconsin, "a way as hard as the path to heaven," Dablon said, reached Lake Winnebago and preached to the Mascoutens and Miamis who lived near. They heard again of the "great river Mississippi," rising far in the north and flowing southward, and of the many peoples who lived along its banks.

"More and more," writes Parkman, "the thoughts of the Jesuits — and not of the Jesuits alone — dwelt on this mysterious stream. Through what regions did it flow; and whither would it lead them — to the South Sea or the 'Sea of Virginia'; to Mexico, Japan, or China? The problem was soon to be solved, and the mystery revealed."

CHAPTER III

Two Fruitless Expeditions

The priests of the Seigniory of St. Sulpice, who had given La Salle his lands, accused him, soon after, of being frivolous; a charge which now appears so unjust as to be really absurd. They were probably annoyed because the young landowner, who they had thought was so firmly established, both for their defense and for his own good, suddenly decided to sell his seigniory in order to finance a very venturesome expedition into the wilderness.

La Salle had gone down to Quebec to lay his plans for exploration before the governor and the intendant of Canada, whose consent was necessary before he could carry them out. Each of these men represented, in a different way, the authority of the king in New France. The governor was more of a military officer; the intendant purely a civil one. The intendant was Jean Baptiste Talon, a very able man, sent over by the king to build up the fortunes of poverty-stricken, terrorized New France. He was succeeding well, by means of

encouraging agriculture, shipbuilding, and various trades and industries that had been neglected up to this period. When La Salle told him of his scheme for opening up the West to commerce, Talon was quick to see the advantage this would give to New France. He spoke favorably of La Salle's plans to the governor, and together they gave him authority to proceed, provided he did it at his own expense.

La Salle had spent everything he had on his seigniory. He made a proposition therefore to the priests who had given it to him that they should buy it back with the improvements he had made. They consented, rather unwillingly, to buy part of it; and he sold the remainder to an ironmonger of Montreal. With the money thus gained he bought four canoes, with the necessary supplies, and hired fourteen men.

There happened to be another expedition preparing at just this time to penetrate the western wilderness; and it was sent by none other than the Sulpitian priests themselves. The governor, Courcelles, knowing of both expeditions, thought that they should join; and as his wish was law in Canada, they were obliged to so do, though their aims were too unlike to make the combination a success.

The Sulpitian expedition was purely a missionary one. Up to this time the Jesuits, with the exception of an early Recollet[1] mission, had faced all the dangers of the western field. Nothing can surpass the heroism of the early Jesuit fathers in Canada. They made their homes with savage tribes, suffered the dirt, smoke, and discomfort of their squalid cabins, went with them on their wanderings, starved with them, and, in many cases, suffered tortures and martyrdom at the hands of their treacherous hosts. They expected no worldly rewards.

But with the destruction of the great mission to the Hurons, which represented their first stage of endeavor, a change seemed to come over their spirit. "Henceforth," says Parkman, "we find the Canadian Jesuit less and less an apostle, more and more an explorer, a man of science, and a politician." The missions were carried on as zealously as ever, but with more attention to worldly affairs, such as the finding of copper, exploration, and trading. The Jesuits' great idea was to gain wealth and power for their order, and they probably hoped to build up in North America, as they had in

[1] The Recollets, a reformed branch of the order of monks founded by St. Francis of Assisi, had come to Canada and settled at Quebec in 1609.

Paraguay, a community where the natives were all contented under their rule, and developed the riches of mines and fields under Jesuit direction. They wanted to make all the conversions, and have all the advantages resulting from the conversions. Naturally, the other religious orders in Canada — the Recollets, or Franciscans, and the Sulpitians — objected to this extension of influence, so a feeling of rivalry was behind the present expedition of the Sulpitians into the missionary field.

The leaders of the expedition were two priests, Father Dollier de Casson and Father Galinée. Dollier de Casson, afterwards the historian of Montreal, appeared a suitable person for the rough journey. He had been a cavalry officer in Europe before he became a priest, was extremely brave, and so large and strong that it was said he could carry two men sitting, one on each hand. Father Galinée had been chosen because he was a skillful map-maker and surveyor and understood the Algonquin language.

In July the double party started from Montreal. There were seven canoes carrying twenty-two men. The two Senecas who had spent the winter with La Salle led the way. In spite of the peace, it was an unfavorable time for visiting the country of the Iroquois, through which they were obliged

to pass, for some Iroquois had just been murdered by rascally Frenchmen at Montreal, and the whole colony trembled in fear of another Indian outbreak. The expedition did not delay on this account, however. They began the journey up the river, stopping many times during the first part of the trip to carry their canoes, or wade with them close to shore, while the rapids tossed and tumbled outside. Father Galinée describes the camping thus: —

"Your lodging is as extraordinary as your vessels; for, after paddling or carrying the canoes all day, you find mother earth ready to receive your wearied body. If the weather is fair, you make a fire and lie down to sleep without further trouble; but if it rains, you must peel bark from the trees, and make a shed by laying it on a frame of sticks. As for your food, it is enough to make you burn all the cookery books that ever were written, for in the woods of Canada one finds means to live well without bread, wine, salt, pepper or spice. The ordinary food is Indian corn, or Turkey wheat, as they call it in France, which is crushed between two stones and boiled, seasoning it with meat or fish, when you can get them. This sort of life seemed so strange to us that we all felt the effects of it; and before we were a hundred

leagues from Montreal, not one of us was free from some malady or other. At last, after all our misery, on the second of August, we discovered Lake Ontario, like a great sea with no land beyond it."

They crossed the lake and landed at Irondequoit Bay, on the south side. A village of the Senecas was not far distant, and a number of these Indians, coming to their camping-place, invited the French to visit them. La Salle and Galinée, with some of the men, accepted. As they approached the village, they saw that it stood on an elevation (now Boughton Hill, in the present town of Victory, New York) and consisted of about one hundred and fifty bark cabins. A number of old men were sitting on the ground waiting to receive them, and one of the oldest got up and made a speech, assuring them that the Senecas were their brothers and welcomed them to their village. The French were given one of the largest cabins for their quarters. Indian children brought them plenty of pumpkins, Indian corn, and berries, and their elders often invited them to feasts of dog's flesh, and "boiled maize seasoned with oil pressed from nuts and the seeds of sunflowers."

So far, so good; but the hoped-for guide to the West was not forthcoming. These Indians were

under the influence of a Jesuit priest, Father Fremin, who had just left, the visitors thought on purpose, to attend a conference of Jesuits at Onondaga. Owing to his instructions, probably — for the Jesuits discouraged explorations in which they did not have a share — the Indians made trouble about furnishing a guide, saying that the tribes among whom the French wished to go were "very bad people" and would certainly kill them. This was a favorite excuse with the Indians when they wished to prevent the French penetrating to other tribes. At last, however, they promised to furnish them a guide when their warriors came back from trading with their friends, the Dutch at Albany. There followed a delay made all the more tiresome by the thought that the summer, the best time for traveling, was rapidly passing.

Meanwhile, some of the Iroquois who were relatives of those who had lately been murdered at Montreal, drank too much French brandy and threatened to kill the French in revenge for the death of their relatives. The French had to keep guard day and night. To make matters still more unbearable, a captive Indian from the West was brought in and burned to death slowly at a stake in the middle of the village, "while the crowd danced and yelled with delight, and the chiefs

and elders sat in a row smoking their pipes and watching the contortions of the victim with an air of serene enjoyment."

When La Salle and Galinée, unable to stop the proceeding, retired to their tent in horror, La Salle warned the priest that in the drunken orgy that always followed such scenes of cruelty their own lives would be in great danger. Accordingly he and Galinée with their men retreated to the camping ground by the lake, where Dollier de Casson and the others of the party were staying.

They waited there till September, when a Seneca, from one of the farthest western villages of the Iroquois confederacy, offered to guide them to his village, from which they could easily make their way to the Ohio.

The French were glad to continue their journey. They coasted along the south shore of Lake Ontario, passing the mouth of the Niagara River, where they could plainly hear the roar of Niagara Falls, seven or eight leagues[1] away.

On the 24th of September they reached Otina-

[1] The old French league is estimated variously as about 2.42 or 2.76 English miles. The distances in this book are usually taken from the chronicles of the explorers themselves, and may not always be absolutely correct, according to our modern measurements; but they serve at least to give the explorers' own impressions of the distance they traversed.

watawa, a village a few miles north of the present town of Hamilton, Ontario. The Indians of this village gave them two guides to the Ohio, one of whom, the faithful Shawnee Nika, attached himself from that time forward to La Salle, accompanied him on all his journeys, and finally shared in the tragedy which ended the great explorer's life. At this town they were surprised to hear of the arrival of still another Frenchman, who proved to be Louis Joliet, son of a wagon-maker of Quebec, who had been sent by the governor to look for Etienne Brulé's copper mine in the neighborhood of Lake Superior. He had been unsuccessful in the search, and was returning to Canada. Joliet had made maps and collected much information concerning the country around Lake Superior. The things he told them about the Pottawattamies and other tribes of that region fired the missionaries with the desire to go in that direction and establish a mission. La Salle hinted that the Jesuits, who already had a mission there, would not welcome rivals in the field, but the Sulpitians paid no attention to him.

La Salle, on his part, did not wish to give up exploring the Ohio. Finally they agreed to separate, La Salle giving as a reason a sickness that had attacked him a few days previously. Galinée

spitefully wrote in his diary that it was thought to be caused by the sight of three large rattlesnakes he had encountered on his way; but as La Salle never afterwards showed any anxiety about his own health, it is likely that he was not so much afraid of rattlesnakes as he was of having to go with the Sulpitians on a journey he thought would be useless. They were priests, and as such he respected them — but not to the extent of giving up his aim for theirs. And his fever gave him an excuse to part from them without giving offense.

The two parties separated on the 30th of September. La Salle let it be understood that he was going back to Montreal. In reality he went on toward the Ohio with the Shawnee Nika and some of the men. The priests and their followers spent the winter on the south shore of Lake Erie. In the spring they continued their journey, and "after many troubles," drew up their canoes one evening on a beach near Point Pelée, toward the western end of Lake Erie. During the night a northeast gale sprang up; the water rose six feet, sweeping away many of their belongings which had been left on the shore, including powder and lead and — most important of all — their portable chapel.

This was a sad calamity. According to their views, it was impossible for them to accomplish

their mission without the chapel. They decided to return to Montreal, but took a very roundabout route, going by way of the Strait of Detroit, up Lake Huron to Georgian Bay, and so to the Sault Ste. Marie. They did this in order to return to Montreal in company with the crowd of Indians who journeyed down every year to sell their furs. At the Sault Ste. Marie were two Jesuit priests, Dablon and Marquette, who welcomed the Sulpitians kindly, but did not urge them to join in their missionary labors. Dollier de Casson and Galinée soon left them, therefore, and with a French guide instead of the Indians they had expected, returned to Montreal by way of the French River, Lake Nippissing and the Ottawa River.

They reached Montreal on the 18th of June, 1670, and were received with much joy by their Sulpitian brothers; but from the point of view of either missions or discoveries, their trip had been a distinct failure. Father Galinée, however, had made the first map known to exist of the Upper Lakes.

In the meantime La Salle went on toward the Ohio, with his men and the Shawnee Nika. The maps and journals of the trip, which remained for some time in the possession of the Cavelier family, have unfortunately been lost, but from the evidence

of a document written at that time by some one who knew him, it is supposed that La Salle discovered the Ohio River and descended it as far as the site of Louisville, Kentucky.

Here his men all deserted him on account of the difficulties of the trip. "He found himself alone," says the document, "four hundred leagues from home, whither he lost no time in returning, ascending the river and living by hunting, herbs, and the gifts of the savages whom he met in his way."

The savages of the forests were kinder to the young explorer than the civilized population of New France. When he returned to Canada, he found himself not only penniless, but laughed at and discredited. The story of his unsuccessful wanderings had reached Montreal, carried there by some of the men who had abandoned him in the woods. The Sulpitians, whose party he had left, were probably not ill-pleased at his lack of success, and the merchants of Montreal were delighted.

"Here's that young fellow who was going to find a passage to China," they said. "He didn't get any nearer China than if he had stayed home at his seigniory by the St. Lawrence. Let's call that place 'China' to spite him." And they did.

The names of the jealous merchants and fur-

traders are long since forgotten; but the name, "La Chine," that they gave in derision has clung, to this day, to the little village and the rapids on the St. Lawrence. But it is no longer an insult; it is a monument to the memory of the young trader who dreamed and dared!

CHAPTER IV

MARQUETTE AND JOLIET

THE Sulpitians, even the stalwart Dollier de Casson, cared nothing about making another attempt at the wilderness; but La Salle's purpose was not so easily given up. In spite of the enemies he had made, he had a firm friend in the intendant, Talon. The few public-spirited men in New France at that time, it seems, were inclined to back La Salle, while those who were scheming only for their own interests opposed him. In some way or other, probably partly through the intendant's help and interest, and partly through borrowing money on his own account, La Salle was able to spend the next two years in making other explorations.

The same memoir quoted before states that he sailed along the shores of the Great Lakes as far as Michillimackinac (Mackinac), went down Lake Michigan, then across country to the Illinois River, which he descended for some distance. The claim has been made that he discovered the Mississippi at this time, but there is nothing to prove

it. However, he satisfied himself that the Mississippi, which he sought, ran into the Gulf of Mexico, and not into the Vermilion Sea.

In the same year that La Salle made his second trip, commissioned by Talon, the latter sent out another party under Daumont de Saint-Lusson, to Lake Superior to hunt for copper mines. Joliet, who, it will be remembered, had been there before, acted as guide. Saint-Lusson, through Perrot, his interpreter, addressed a large assemblage of Indians at the mission at Sault Ste. Marie, and formally took possession of the country for France. In commemoration of the event, as was their custom, the French nailed the royal arms, engraven on a metal plate, to a post; but as soon as they had left the Indians stripped it off, thinking it was a charm that might do them mischief. Saint-Lusson went on to Lake Superior, but found no copper mines. He returned to Quebec soon after; and once again Talon resolved to send out another expedition, to plant "the lilies of France," if possible, on the banks of the Mississippi itself.

Joliet, the practical and intelligent native-born son of Quebec, who had as a boy, like La Salle, studied for the Jesuit priesthood, and later turned merchant and explorer, was chosen to lead the expedition. His companion was Father Marquette,

a frail but heroic Jesuit of the old school, who was stationed at Point St. Ignace, a mission at the straits of Mackinac. Marquette's great ambition was to carry the Word of God to the Illinois nation, some of whose members he had known when he had established a mission still further west, at the farthest end of Lake Superior. He was delighted therefore when Joliet arrived at St. Ignace, and informed him that Count Frontenac, the new governor, and Talon, the intendant, wished him to accompany Joliet on the expedition.

They began their voyage in two birch canoes, with a small supply of smoked meat and Indian corn, on the 17th of May, 1673; they followed the northern shores of Lake Michigan, crossed Green Bay, ascended the Fox River, as Nicollet had done, through Lake Winnebago, to the place where it was but a short portage to the Wisconsin. The modern city of Portage, Wisconsin, stands at this spot, on a short canal connecting the two rivers.

On their way they talked with several tribes of Indians who were friendly, but who told them wild tales of the dangers of the Mississippi, the ferocious tribes along its shores, the "demon" whose roar could be heard for miles, and the "monsters" (alligators) who would devour them and their canoes. Undismayed by these warnings, the trav-

elers embarked on the Wisconsin, whose steady current was a relief to them after the gentle meanderings of the Fox River through the rice-fields. The Indians of that region had a legend that the Fox River was originally the bed of a great serpent, and that the waters, in their serpentine windings, were formed by the dew which he shook from his back, as he left his resting-place.

The greatest historian of the French in Canada describes the scenery through which they passed after "personal observation of the river during midsummer": —

"They glided calmly down the tranquil stream, by islands choked with trees and matted with entangling grape-vines; by forests, groves and prairies, the parks and pleasure-grounds of a prodigal Nature; by thickets and marshes and broad bare sand-bars; under the shadowing trees, between whose tops looked down from afar the bold brow of some woody bluff. At night, the bivouac, — the canoes inverted on the bank, the flickering fire, the meal of bison flesh or venison, the evening pipes, and slumber beneath the stars; and when in the morning they embarked again, the mist hung on the river like a bridal veil, then melted before the sun, till the glassy water and the languid woods basked breathless in the sultry glare."

On the 17th of June, "with a joy," writes Marquette, "that I cannot express," they guided their canoes from the Wisconsin out upon the broad, dark current of the great Mississippi River.

A few days later they visited a village of some Illinois Indians, living at a little distance from the river, probably near the site of Keokuk. Their reception was a proof of the gentle and courteous nature of these savages. The chief saluted them at the door of his wigwam with a gesture as if to shield his eyes from the sun, and the welcoming speech, "Frenchmen, how bright the sun shines when you come to visit us! All our village awaits you; and you shall enter our wigwams in peace." They were royally feasted on sagamite (corn-meal porridge), fish, a large dog (which they declined), and buffalo meat; "and the master of ceremonies fed them in turn, like infants, with a large spoon," or put the morsels of meat in their mouths with his fingers.

Leaving these kindly entertainers, who gave them a slave for a guide, the travelers returned to the Mississippi, continued southward, and passed successively the mouths of the Illinois, the Missouri, and the Ohio rivers, finally reaching the mouth of the Arkansas. Here, thinking themselves much nearer the Gulf of Mexico than they really were,

and fearing that they might fall into the hands of the Spaniards and be killed if they went too near the sea, they turned about and paddled their canoes upstream, Marquette almost exhausted by sickness and the intense midsummer heat. They took a different route home, being guided by some warriors of the Illinois up the Des Plaines River and on the portage to Lake Michigan over what is now the site of Chicago. They ascended Lake Michigan to Green Bay, reaching there the end of September, after they had paddled their canoes more than twenty-five hundred miles, in four months.

The worn-out priest was obliged to rest at Green Bay, but Joliet went on to report his discovery to Frontenac. At the very last stage of his successful trip in the rapids above Montreal, misfortune overtook him.

"I had escaped every peril of the Indians," he wrote in a letter to Frontenac, "I had passed forty-two rapids; and was on the point of debarking, full of joy at the success of so long and difficult an enterprise, when my canoe capsized, after all the danger seemed over. I lost two men and my box of papers, within sight of the first French settlements, which I had left almost two years before. Nothing remains to me but my life, and

the ardent desire to employ it on any service which you may please to direct."

In the next fall, that of 1674, Marquette, after spending the winter at Green Bay, went back to the great village of the Illinois, established a mission there, and then, feeling his strength failing, started to return to Mackinac, accompanied by two faithful attendants, Pierre and Jacques. Death overtook him on the way, and he breathed his last on the shore of Lake Michigan. They buried him there; but the next spring some of his devoted Indian converts dug up his bones, according to the Indian custom, and, singing their funeral chants, carried them over the waters to Marquette's old station at Mackinac, where his brother priests received them and buried them under the floor of the chapel.

La Salle was to bring the next missionaries to the valley of the Mississippi — and one of them, at least, was a very different kind from the saintly Marquette. But we must go back for a few years to trace the progress of La Salle's ambitions and achievements while others were forestalling him on the Mississippi.

CHAPTER V

Frontenac and La Salle

The intendant, Talon, and the governor, Courcelles, had left Canada, but an even more powerful personage had come to Quebec. This was the new governor, the Count de Frontenac. He and La Salle had much in common. They were both proud, ambitious, and determined; both needed money, both had many enemies, both looked far into the future — and they both knew how to manage Indians!

Frontenac, soon after his arrival, determined to secure a lasting peace with the Iroquois and prevent their taking furs from the west to the English and Dutch in New York instead of bringing them to Canada. The best way to do this, he thought, was to hold a great council with them, and get their consent to his building a fort and trading-post at a favorable spot on Lake Ontario. He and La Salle fixed on what is now the site of Kingston, Ontario, as a suitable place. La Salle went to Onondaga to tell the Iroquois to come to the

council; while Frontenac, not without much opposition from others in the colony, got together at Montreal a fleet of about one hundred and twenty canoes and two large flatboats, painted a gaudy red and blue to impress the Indians, and a company of about four hundred men — officers and soldiers of the king, *habitants*, *coureurs de bois*, and Indians.

It was a difficult task to get this imposing flotilla past the dangerous rapids, and the governor never would have accomplished it if it had not been for the Indians in the party, who admired him so much that they toiled day and night, in the water and out, Frontenac directing them in person, till calm water was reached. Frontenac feared that their provisions would get wet; but no such accident happened, and they made their way safely up the river, through the charming scenery of the Thousand Islands, till they reached the broad expanse of Lake Ontario. Here the governor had the fleet drawn up in impressive array; first, four divisions of canoes, then the two flat-boats; then himself, with guards, staff, and gentlemen volunteers; then the remainder of the canoes in ordered ranks.

The Iroquois were waiting for them on the shore by the Cataraqui River, and were much awed by

this display, and even more when the party landed and they saw the arms and uniforms and martial maneuvers of the soldiers.

Frontenac held several councils, addressing them in the following words: —

"Children! Mohawks, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. I am glad to see you here, where I have had a fire lighted for you to smoke by, and for me to talk to you. You have done well, my children, to obey the command of your Father. Take courage; you will hear his word, which is full of peace and tenderness. For do not think that I have come for war. My mind is full of peace, and she walks by my side. Courage, then, children, and take rest."

At another address he changed his tone.

"If," he said, "your Father can come so far, with so great a force, through such dangerous rapids, merely to make you a visit of pleasure and friendship, what would he do if you should awaken his anger, and make it necessary for him to punish his disobedient children? He is the arbiter of peace and war. Beware how you offend him!"

Never before had a white man dared to address the ferocious Iroquois as "children"; but so impressive was the personality of Frontenac, and so imposing the array of men and boats he had

brought with him, that the savages took with enthusiasm from him what they would not have permitted from another. The council was an unqualified success; they promised to trade only with him, and the desired peace appeared fully secured.

Frontenac has been accused of wishing to establish this trading-post for his own profit. This is more or less true; but that does not lessen the undoubted benefit that a trading-post at this location meant to New France. But the merchants of lower Canada disapproved of it, as they had disapproved of La Salle's owning lands at La Chine. When they found that La Salle was hand-in-glove with the governor at the new lake station, they were all the more incensed. There were quarrels innumerable. La Salle took the governor's part, probably in all sincerity, for he admired Frontenac. To reward him, the governor recommended him to the French court for the governorship of the new fort, henceforth to be known as Fort Frontenac.

To secure this post, it was necessary for La Salle himself to go to France. He sailed in the autumn of 1674 (just after Joliet had returned from his discovery of the Mississippi) and was well received by the king, who granted not only his petition for the new seigniory, but also a patent of

nobility, in consideration of his many explorations and services. Henceforward, he was not Monsieur de La Salle, but the Sieur de La Salle. With the establishing of Fort Frontenac, and the rights to fur-trade there, went heavy obligations, for La Salle must pay back to the king the ten thousand francs that had been spent on it, besides entirely rebuilding the fort within two years, maintaining a garrison, and building a church, all at La Salle's expense.

La Salle borrowed the necessary money, chiefly from his family, then went back to Canada, and, with the help of Frontenac, succeeded in tearing down the old fort and building a new one within the required time. He also built several large war-canoes, trained his men to be the most skillful canoe-men in America, had several acres of ground cultivated, raised poultry and cattle, and formed a considerable colony of Canadian settlers. Three Recollet priests, an order much favored by Frontenac, built and occupied a mission-house near by. Near the fort was also a fairly large village of Iroquois, whose children, wrote one of the priests, "we teach to read with our little French children, and they teach each other their language in turn."

Here then was La Salle lord of another feudal domain, again the most desirable one in Canada

from the point of view of the fur-trade. He was hand-in-glove with the governor, and had every chance of becoming rich and powerful. Indeed, at the end of two years he was credited with an annual income of twenty-five thousand livres (five thousand dollars). But, indeed, the love of prosperity and ease formed no part of his character. Fort Frontenac was to him merely a starting-point for his explorations. During all these years his thoughts still dwelt on the great and mysterious Mississippi. He knew now that it flowed, not into the Gulf of California, but into the Gulf of Mexico. He knew that the upper part of its valley, and in all probability the lower also, was fair and fertile, and much pleasanter than rugged Canada, which was covered with ice and snow during half the year. He wished to claim all this beautiful country for France — to keep out the Spaniards at the south, the Dutch and English at the east, and the Jesuits at the north — to build a line of forts all the way from Fort Frontenac to the mouth, and to carry on commerce with France in furs, buffalo hides, and other products of the country by way of the Gulf of Mexico. It was a vast scheme, but not an impractical one. To accomplish it he must again have the consent of the king; so again he sailed for France at the end of the year 1677.

The Jesuits had been unfriendly to La Salle all during his occupation of Fort Frontenac. Their plan had been to keep this country of the Great Lakes for their own, not only that they might be undisturbed in their missions, but also that they might have the full benefit of the fur-trade. A memoir of the period says that even their Indian converts noticed their designs, and complained that they would not stay to teach them after the beavers had become scarce, but thriftily moved on to more profitable regions. La Salle at his new post was a great obstacle in their path. They tried to stir up the Iroquois on the south side of Lake Ontario against him, but La Salle got wind of their designs and persuaded Frontenac to hold another council at which he completely convinced the savages that both he and La Salle were their firm friends. Then the Jesuits tried to make trouble between La Salle and his elder brother, the Abbé Cavelier in the Seminary at Montreal.

Though La Salle was now a grown man, with infinitely more character than his brother possessed, such were the ideas of French families at the time, that all the money which was sent La Salle by his relatives in France was sent in care of the elder brother. Once Cavelier used the power thus given him in a very trying way — to prevent, for no

particular reason, La Salle's marrying an irreproachable young Canadian lady.

La Salle's enemies caused stories to reach Cavelier's ears to the effect that he was leading a dissipated life at Fort Frontenac; but the scandal had quite a different effect from that which they expected, for the priest was so horrified that he went up to Fort Frontenac himself to rebuke his brother for his sins, only to find him conducting himself in the most exemplary manner.

About this time La Salle was poisoned by having verdigris and water hemlock mixed with his food. He was very ill for forty or fifty days, and would have died if he had not been of an unusually strong constitution. He thought at first that the Jesuits were responsible, but discovered afterwards that it was Perrot, the *coureur de bois* who had accompanied Saint-Lusson to Lake Superior. Perrot confessed that he committed the crime without the knowledge of the Jesuits, but because he thought it would please them. After a short imprisonment, La Salle very magnanimously pardoned him.

Such were the troubles which had beset him even during this comparatively peaceful part of his career; and when he reached Paris again, in 1678, he found that his enemies were at work here too, condemning him to the king as visionary and impractical. But

in spite of them his memorial found a favorable hearing. The king granted him the right "to labor at the discovery of the western parts of our aforesaid country of New France," to build forts at such places as he thought necessary, on condition that he finish the enterprise within five years, and — the usual proviso — at his own cost! As recompense, the sole right in trade of buffalo skins was allowed him and his associates.

During this visit to France, although poor and staying in an out-of-the-way street, La Salle made several influential friends, including Colbert,[1] the minister to the king, several nobles, and a learned abbé, the Abbé Renaudot. The latter wrote of him:

"All those among my friends who have seen La Salle find him a man of great intelligence and sense. He rarely speaks on any subject except when questioned about it, and his words are very few and very precise. He distinguishes perfectly between that which he knows with certainty and that which he knows with some mingling of doubt. When he does not know, he does not hesitate to avow it; and though I have heard him say the same thing

[1] The Mississippi was called by La Salle and by many of the early explorers the River Colbert after Jean Baptiste Colbert, Minister of Finance under Louis XIV.

more than five or six times, when persons were present who had not heard it before, he always said it in the same manner. In short, I never heard anybody speak whose words carried with them more marks of truth."

La Salle, as he himself acknowledges, was shy and reserved, but he had a remarkable power, when he exerted himself, of interesting others in his enterprises. Probably because his own enthusiasm was so deep and his sincerity so evident, he was always able to raise money when he needed it, to placate his creditors and even to borrow more of them when things went wrong. He had to pay a heavy price on the money he borrowed, however; on many of the loans he agreed to pay forty per cent interest, and "he pledged Fort Frontenac, the magnificent establishment yielding 25,000 livres [$5000.00] annual income, for the paltry loan of 14,000 livres [$2800.00] on which, presumably, he paid the same deadly rate of interest."

At this time he raised a considerable amount (mostly from his relatives), hired about thirty men, and bought the needed supplies, including iron, rigging, etc. for the ship he intended to build to navigate the Great Lakes; also arms and goods for trading; and with two officers to assist him, set sail from Rochelle in July, 1678.

One of the officers was an Italian introduced to him by the Abbé Renaudot — Henri de Tonty,[1] one of the bravest men and stanchest friends that ever graced the annals of history. He had lost one hand, blown off by a grenade at a battle in Sicily, and had replaced it by an iron one, on which he always wore a glove.[2] He was not of strong physique, but, as La Salle wrote to a friend, "his energy and address make him equal to anything." La Salle's other officer was La Motte de Lussière, who had a share in the enterprise.

[1] He was a son of the man who invented a form of life-insurance still known as Tontine.

[2] "La Potherie says that he once or twice used it [the iron hand] to good purpose when the Indians became disorderly, in breaking the heads of the most contumacious or knocking out their teeth. Not knowing at the time the secret of the unusual efficacy of his blows, they regarded him as a 'medicine' of the first order." — Parkman's "La Salle," page 118.

CHAPTER VI

BUILDING THE *GRIFFIN*

HISTORY sometimes seems to have been written by a clever dramatist, so skillfully are lights and shadows, heroism and buffoonery, tragedy and comedy, intermingled. On La Salle's next voyage of discovery, besides the company of his two officers, Tonty and La Motte, he was to have that of a man who cannot help but amuse us, in spite of his faults. This was the boastful, talkative, and adventurous friar, Father Louis Hennepin.

Hennepin crossed the ocean on the same boat with La Salle on his previous trip from France. Soon after landing at Quebec he had gone to Fort Frontenac, where he and another Recollet monk, Luc Buisset, built the mission-house and chapel and taught the little Iroquois to say their prayers. When La Salle and his party returned from France in 1678, they found that Hennepin had come to Quebec to meet them; and the sturdy priest was overjoyed when he learned that La Salle had

brought him a recommendation from the superiors of his order in France that he should go as missionary on the proposed exploration.

To give a short account of Hennepin's previous life — while still a schoolboy in Europe, he felt, in his own words, "a strong inclination to leave the world and to live in the rule of pure strict virtue." He accordingly entered the Recollet order. The costume of these monks was a gray robe, with attached hood or cowl, a cord about the waist, and sandals for their bare feet, on which account they were often called the Barefoot Friars.

"As I advanced in age," says Hennepin, "an inclination for traveling in foreign parts strengthened in my heart." His superior sent him to Calais during the season for salting herrings. "In this place," he confesses, "my strongest passion was to listen to the stories which sea captains told of their long voyages." He afterwards returned to the convent of Bieg at Dunkirk, where he often hid behind tavern doors while the sailors were talking over their cruises. "While thus endeavoring to hear them, the tobacco smoke sickened me terribly; yet I listened eagerly to all that these men told of their adventures at sea, of the dangers they had encountered, and the various incidents of their voyages in foreign parts. I would have passed

whole days and nights without eating in this occupation, which was so agreeable to me. . . ."

This travel-loving priest contrived to be sent as a missionary to most of the cities of Holland. He halted at Maestricht, where a battle had just been fought, and administered the sacraments to more than five thousand wounded. He was at the bloody battle of Senef (August 11, 1674), and had abundant occupation in relieving and comforting the wounded men. "And at last," he says modestly, "after enduring great hardships and encountering extreme dangers in sieges of cities, in trenches, and on the field of battle, where I exposed myself greatly for the salvation of my neighbor, while the soldiers breathed only blood and carnage, I beheld myself in a condition to satisfy my first inclinations." This was, to go as a missionary to Canada.

Upon learning at Quebec of his being chosen to accompany La Salle, Hennepin began at once to make his preparations. These were simple, since he took no other garment but that he had on, the gray robe with the rope girdle, and carried in his "little bark canoe" only a blanket and rush mat for a bed, and his most precious possession, a portable chapel or box containing an altar and the requisites for saying mass, given him by one of his

superiors in Canada. Frontenac, always fond of the Recollet order, dined him at the castle in Quebec, and soon after, the friar, with two canoemen, set out on the first stage of his long trip. La Salle was to follow later.

Soon after his return from France, La Salle sent fifteen men ahead of him to the region near Lake Michigan to trade with the Indians, in order that he might begin to pay the interest on his debts. On November 18 another party left Fort Frontenac; it consisted of La Motte, Hennepin, and sixteen men, with the necessary equipment to begin building a fort near Niagara Falls, to control that portage, and to build a ship above the falls to navigate the lakes.

They started on a stormy day characteristic of late autumn in that region, when the sullen, blue-gray waters toss angrily under the scourge of the northwest wind. The men were afraid of the waves, and La Motte hugged the northern shore of Lake Ontario to be in the lee. After a while the wind changed to the northeast, which made their passage easier, and they reached without mishap the upper end of Lake Ontario. After anchoring for a while in the Humber River, where they were almost locked in by the ice, they cut their way out and on December 6 entered the Niagara River.

Photographed by William H. Rau, Philadelphia.

NIAGARA FALLS

"The waters which fall from this vast height do foam and boil after the most hideous manner imaginable, making an outrageous noise, more terrible than that of thunder." — FATHER HENNEPIN

m" says I
ral ordina
nuan Is
stimated
n the s
ish, larg
and the
. These
nick in
den cano
Hennepin
ar up th
y could
and a
warded
calls a
This w
raphic
reat C
n Isle
which
after
an o
Thun
Sout
fift

"Here," says Father Hennepin, "after the *Te Deum* and ordinary prayers for Thanksgiving, the Tsonnontouan Indians [Senecas] of the whole little village situated at the mouth of the river, with one draught of the seine, took more than three hundred white fish, larger than carp, which are of excellent taste, and the least injurious of all fishes in the world. These savages gave them all to us, ascribing their luck in fishing to the arrival of the great wooden canoe."

Hennepin and some companions pushed a canoe as far up the rapid current of the Niagara River as they could, then ascended the steep cliffs at the left, and after a walk of some length, they were rewarded with a sight of the wonderful falls which he calls a "vast and prodigious Cadence of Water." "This wonderful Downfall," so Father Hennepin's graphic description reads, "is compounded of two great Cross-streams of Water, and two Falls, with an Isle sloping along the middle of it. The Waters which fall from this vast height do foam and boil after the most hideous Manner imaginable, making an outrageous Noise, more terrible than that of Thunder; for when the wind blows from off the South, their dismal roaring may be heard above fifteen Leagues off."

They were, in all probability, the first Europeans

to view this vast cataract, which so many have since come over seas to visit.

La Motte and his men now began to build a fortified house near the mouth of the Niagara, although the weather was so cold that they had to pour boiling water on the ground to drive in the posts. The Seneca Indians, who had a village near by, showed themselves unfriendly, for they saw that a fort at the Niagara would interfere with their trading and be dangerous to them in case of war with the French. La Motte, who had instructions from La Salle to try to win them over, resolved to visit their principal village, beyond the Genesee River, southeast of the site of Rochester, the same village which La Salle and Dollier de Casson had visited on the previous trip. Hennepin and several men accompanied La Motte.

It was a march of five days, through the snow, in which they camped out at night. They had with them as provisions only some small bags of roast corn, but on the way met some friendly Iroquois hunters, who enriched their scanty bill of fare by a gift of venison and fifteen or sixteen black squirrels.

It will be remembered that two Jesuits, Garnier and Raffeix, had a mission at this village, a circumstance which was not favorable to the newcomers' hopes of success with the Indians.

The savages received the visitors with a politeness due mainly to the presents the French had brought. Forty-two Indian elders appeared at the council which was held; they were wrapped in robes of beaver, wolf, or black squirrel skins, had pipes in their mouths, and spoke deliberately and gravely. They listened to the reasons La Motte, through an interpreter, laïd before them, as to why they should let the French build a fort in their country. One of them was because La Salle wished to build a "great canoe to go and seek goods in Europe by a shorter way than that of the rapids of the St. Lawrence, in order to supply them with goods at a cheaper rate." But they were noncommittal in their replies. Says Hennepin, "All the reasons that we gave the Iroquois satisfied them only in appearance, for entire indifference to everything is a maxim with these Indians; and a man would pass among them for an ill regulated mind, if he did not agree to everything, and if he contradicted the arguments made to them in council; even though one should go so far as to utter the greatest absurdities and nonsense, they will always say, 'Niava,' 'See, that is right, my brother, you are right,' but they believe only what they please in private."

La Motte got no satisfaction from them; and

finally, as La Salle and Dollier had done on the previous visit, left in disgust because the Iroquois insisted upon burning a captive by way of providing a cheerful entertainment for their guests.

La Salle, who had come up the lake in a vessel with Tonty and more men, arrived at the village of the Senecas soon after, on Christmas Day, and with his usual success where Indians were concerned, won them over to a more favorable state of mind, so that they agreed to his plans and even promised to help him by every means in their power. He then made his way to Niagara, and was looking above the Falls for a place suitable for a shipyard when a very unfortunate accident happened.

This was the wrecking of the ship he had come in, which contained many things for the building of the new ship above the Falls. It was thought that the captain had proved treacherous and wrecked her on purpose. At any rate, he had disobeyed La Salle's orders. Only the anchors and cables were saved. "He also lost some canoes with a good deal of merchandise," says Hennepin, "and had several reverses, which would have made any one but him abandon the undertaking."

La Motte and his men made their way above the Falls and began building the boat with what they had saved from the wreck. La Salle left La Motte

in charge and, with two men and a dog to drag his baggage over the ice, went back to Fort Frontenac, to look after his affairs there. On this trip they had only parched corn to eat, and even this gave out entirely two days before they reached the fort. La Motte soon broke down from the hardship of his winter journeys and camping and he also went back to Fort Frontenac. Tonty took his place.

The company was not a happy one. The workmen — French, Flemish, and Italian — grumbled and threatened to desert because the Indians would not supply them with sufficient provisions; and the Indians, who had forgotten their promise to La Salle, were sulky and threatening. Luckily, most of the braves were away hunting, or they might have made a serious attack. As it was, one of them, pretending to be drunk, threatened to kill the blacksmith, but the French made such a resistance that he was frightened. An Iroquois squaw warned them that her people intended to set the ship on fire, and the French were obliged to guard it day and night. Father Hennepin says that it was preaching alone that kept the men at their duty, but it was more likely that Tonty's influence and strong "iron hand" had something to do with it.

By spring the vessel, though not finished, was

ready to be launched, a matter attended with some ceremony. They fired three cannon salutes, sang the *Te Deum*, and gave several cheers of "Vive le Roi!" The Indians were amazed at these demonstrations, but shared in the rejoicing.

The boat was christened the *Griffin*, in allusion to the coat of arms of Count Frontenac, which had griffins as supporters. It also boasted a figurehead, or wooden representation of this mythical animal, at the prow. La Salle is reported to have said "that he wished to make the griffin soar above the crows," meaning that he would make Frontenac triumph over the black-robed Jesuits.

The French now slept in the boat, in order to be out of reach of the Indians, while they worked by day to complete the vessel as she lay in the water. The remainder of the Iroquois, returning from their hunting, were much surprised to see the boat already afloat, and said the French must be "spirits" or "demons" to be able to build so large a vessel in so short a time. Later in the spring it was finished completely and they only awaited La Salle's return to begin the journey. But it was August before they saw him again.

CHAPTER VII

From Niagara to the Illinois

At length La Salle arrived, bringing with him three more Recollet friars, Fathers Gabriel Ribourde and Zenobe Membré, who were to accompany him on the trip, as well as Melithon Watteau, who stayed behind at Niagara. The expedition now consisted of thirty-two men. By the 7th of August all was ready, and on that day the *Griffin* began her westward course, after those on board had sung a *Te Deum* and fired all the cannon. Some Iroquois warriors, who were bringing in captives from countries in the west more than five hundred leagues distant, gazed at the boat in astonishment, and later on informed their friends, the Dutch, at Albany, of this new and wonderful craft. The current of the Niagara was so strong that Tonty and his men, before La Salle's arrival, could not force the boat against it; but "owing to the resolution and address of Monsieur de La Salle," says Father Membré, they managed to propel her up the river with tow-ropes

and sails until they reached Lake Erie. There she spread her white wings and skimmed away before a fresh breeze — the first sailing vessel to navigate the waters of the Great Lakes.

Three days later they reached the Strait of Detroit. It was a pleasant country through which they now sailed in the summer weather, and this part of the trip, in comparison with what was to come after, was a veritable picnic journey. They were delighted with the plains and forests, "groves and tall woods," wrote Father Membré, who kept a journal, "all scattered here and there, so that one would think that the ancient Romans, princes and nobles, would have made them as many villas!" The woods were full of walnut, chestnut, plum, and apple trees, and wild vines loaded with grapes.

"It is the place in which deer most delight," says the chronicle quaintly; and there were besides bears, "by no means fierce and very good to eat," and all kinds of small game and fowl in abundance. The French and Indians killed so much game that the decks and bulwarks of the vessel were loaded with the meat. Hennepin thought that "those who will one day have the happiness to possess this fertile and pleasant strait will be very much obliged to those who

have shown them the way." Was he right? How many on board the thousands of ships that go through the Strait to-day think of the intrepid little band that first passed through in 1680?

When they came to Lake Huron they encountered a terrible storm, in which the poor *Griffin* labored and tossed on mountainous waves as if she were going to the bottom. The passengers and crew were in mortal terror. Seasick and wretched, they gathered in the cabin while the priests prayed for deliverance. Even La Salle's courage was shaken, and he "commended the enterprise to God." Hennepin says they thereupon adopted St. Anthony of Padua as the protector of their enterprise, and as if in response to their prayers the wind soon subsided.

A few days later, after much buffeting, they arrived at the beautiful islands and woody bluffs of Michillimackinac,[1] now called the Straits of

[1] The name of Michillimackinac was applied in old times both to the island in the middle of the strait leading out of Lake Michigan, and also to the northern and southern points of land which form the strait. The place referred to here, where the fur-traders had their post and the Jesuits their missions, was on the north side of the strait, at the spot now known as ancient Michillimackinac. Later the French post was moved to the south side of the strait, to the place now known as Old Mackinac. For convenience in this book this locality will be referred to by the modern name of Mackinac.

Mackinac, which already, as we have seen, was a mission-post of the Jesuits and a favorite resort of fur-traders. Both parties were enemies of La Salle, but for the time being they concealed their enmity in order that they might better accomplish their secret purpose of stirring up the western tribes of Indians against him.

The *Griffin* tacked gallantly into port, firing her cannon, to the great astonishment of the Indians. Her passengers landed with ceremony, and carrying their arms, proceeded to the bark chapel of the Ottawas, where mass was said. La Salle knelt before the altar in a scarlet cloak trimmed with gold lace. Taking no chances, even at church, he had ordered the arms stacked outside, with a sentry to guard them.

A disagreeable discovery awaited him. He had expected to meet at the Straits the fifteen men he had sent ahead the preceding autumn to trade for him. Now he found that nearly all of them had deserted, having been induced to do so by his enemies at Mackinac, who had told them that his scheme was hopeless and that all the party would certainly perish. Six men had deserted entirely, carrying off more than 3000 livres ($600.) worth of La Salle's goods; others had wasted more than 1200 livres worth or spent it for support at

Mackinac, where provisions were very dear. Four of the deserters were at the Straits; these La Salle found and arrested. Several had escaped entirely, but others were reported to be at Sault Ste. Marie, and he sent Tonty with six men to capture them.

The remainder of the party set sail again in the *Griffin* early in September, entered Green Bay on Lake Michigan, and landed on an island at its mouth. This island was inhabited by some Pottawattamie Indians, whose chief had a great admiration for Count Frontenac and was equally impressed by La Salle. He was often heard to declare in after years that he had known but three great chiefs during his life, Frontenac, La Salle, and himself! He showed his friendship on the present occasion by having the peace dance danced for La Salle; he provided his guests with all the food they could carry, and boarded the *Griffin* as she lay at anchor during a violent storm, when he feared she would be swept away, because he "wished to perish with the children of Onontio, the Governor of the French, his good father and friend."

La Salle found on this island some of his men who had, strange to say, proved faithful to their trust and collected a quantity of furs for him.

He made a rash resolve — to send the furs back to Niagara on the *Griffin*, as payment for his creditors. Those with him objected to the plan, but La Salle, the old chronicle remarks, "never listened to any one's advice." As he and his party would have to depend on canoes till the *Griffin* returned, he was obliged to leave in it many goods, tools, and utensils which were very necessary to him. The pilot had orders to leave the furs at Niagara, take on board other goods which he would find there, sent from Fort Frontenac, and return with all speed to Mackinac, where he would find instructions awaiting him.

With a single parting shot from her cannon, the *Griffin* sailed off, on a beautiful autumn day, all her canvas spread to a light west wind. One may imagine that those left behind looked after her regretfully, perhaps with a premonition that they would never see her again.

The next day, the 19th of September, the remainder of the party left the island of the hospitable Pottawattamies, fourteen of them in four canoes, heavily loaded besides with a forge and many tools, arms, and merchandise. Father Hennepin, in the smallest canoe, had need of all his strength and skill, for his mate was a carpenter who understood nothing of managing the boat.

Tonty was still absent, looking for the deserters, but the party expected to meet him at the mouth of the Miami, now the St. Joseph River, which flows into the southern end of Lake Michigan. La Salle had decided not to make the portage by way of the river Chicago, which was nearer to him, and his carefully planned choice of routes makes it evident that he had been in that country before. As they were crossing the lake, the calm suddenly changed to a violent storm. The heavily loaded canoes were in great danger, while the men in them feared not only for themselves, but for the safety of the *Griffin* on her eastward way.

Night had fallen. There was danger of the canoes being separated, so those in them called across the darkness and waves to each other, that they might keep together. The waves broke over their bows and nearly swamped them. This storm lasted four days, with a fury like an ocean tempest. At last they reached the shore in a little sandy bay and waited here five days for calmer weather. The Indian hunter, probably Nika, could find no better game for them than a porcupine, which they used to season their squashes and Indian corn.

Though able to continue after a few days, they were still hindered by storms. Worst of all, the

corn and squashes given them by the Pottawattamies failed them. On the 1st of October they had made from twenty-five to thirty miles fasting, when they arrived near another village of the Pottawattamies, and were rejoiced to see the Indians flocking down to the shore in friendly fashion, to receive them and help them land their canoes in the breakers, which were rolling high. But La Salle was afraid some of his hungry men would desert to these Indians, so he gave the very unwelcome order for them to paddle on. They landed three leagues from the village, and had reason to regret having refused the Indians' help, for the waves were still rolling so high that the men had to jump into the water and drag the canoes ashore, while the surf broke over their heads. There was a very strong undertow which almost dragged them down under the water. To save old Father Gabriel from this danger, Hennepin took him on his shoulders and carried him ashore, while the elder priest, in spite of the perils he had gone through, and being drenched to the skin, "never failed to display an extraordinary cheerfulness."

La Salle mistrusted the Indians of the near-by village, in spite of their seeming friendliness, so he ordered his men to have their arms in readiness

and posted himself on guard in a favorable spot. Three men then took the calumet of peace given them by the Pottawattamies of the island, and went to the village to beg provisions.

"The calumet," says Father Hennepin, "is a kind of large pipe for smoking, the head of which is of a fine red stone well polished, and the stem two feet and one half long is a pretty stout cane adorned with feathers of all sorts of colors, very neatly mingled and arranged, with several tresses of women's hair, braided in various ways, with two wings. . . ." He goes on to explain that it was a sure guarantee of peaceful treatment and respected by all the tribes of the west.

The men with the calumet found that the Indians had fled from the village; but they took some corn, leaving goods in exchange. All of La Salle's men spent the night under arms. About ten the next morning, old men from the village arrived, bearing their calumet, and gave a feast to all the French, La Salle returning the compliment with presents of axes, knives, and beads.

On the same day the French, wearied though they must have been, continued their arduous journey along the southern shore of Lake Michigan. The scenery was now wild and threatening; great hills bordered the lake so closely that there

was barely room to land their canoes. On account of this, and the heavy surf, they were obliged to carry their canoes and cargo to the top of the hills when they camped for the night. They still had trouble in landing, and two men from each canoe had to jump into water waist-deep, hold the canoe head on to the waves, and "push it ahead or draw it back as the wave rolled in or ran out from land, till it was unloaded," to borrow Father Hennepin's description, the details of which will be well understood by any one who has ever landed a loaded canoe on a leeward shore.

Their provisions consisting only of the Indian corn taken from the last village, they ate very sparingly. Father Gabriel was taken with fainting fits, from which Hennepin twice roused him by something he called "confection of hyacinth," whatever that might have been. The hungry men ran to pick and eat berries and haws whenever they saw them, and often fell sick in consequence. La Salle and Father Hennepin, however, retained their strength. At last the starving party saw some crows and eagles hovering over a carcass. They pushed eagerly to the spot, and found the half of a fine fat deer killed and only half eaten by wolves, whose feast they had no hesitation in finishing.

The country now began to grow finer and the climate more temperate. From the first of October on they killed a great deal of game, stags, deer, and water-fowl. Toward the last of October, they reached the end of Lake Michigan, where they were forced to land on account of the heavy wind.

Several of the party went exploring, and came back with great grapes, as big as damson plums, growing on vines which twined so high that they had to cut down the trees in order to get the fruit. They made wine for use in celebrating mass, and the men ate the grapes also with their game.

Then they saw what is always a disturbing sight to wanderers in a savage country — the fresh footprints of men. La Salle ordered his followers on guard and cautioned them to be silent. One of the men, however, saw a bear, and his desire for game got the better of him. He fired, killing the bear, which tumbled from the top of the hill to the very foot, near their cabins. The noise brought out into the open one hundred and twenty Outagamies, or Foxes, camping near by. La Salle was anxious, blamed the men for their carelessness, and stationed a sentinel near the canoes, under which the goods had been placed to keep dry.

That night the rain came down in torrents, and under cover of rain and darkness, thirty Foxes,

in spite of the sentinel, who was either asleep or unobservant, crept to where the canoes were and managed to steal the coat of one of the men and some other goods. La Salle heard a noise and awoke. The Indian chief, finding that they were discovered, called out the somewhat unconvincing assurance that they were friends.

La Salle answered, in effect, that it was a peculiar time for a friendly call, and that as an ordinary thing people did not come by night unless they intended to kill or steal! The chief responded that the shot that had been fired had made his countrymen think it was a war party of Iroquois, since the Indians in that part of the country did not use guns; but when they discovered that they were the French, whom they loved like brothers, they were so impatient to see them that they could not wait till morning to visit them and smoke the calumet!

La Salle pretended to believe these absurd excuses of the wily chief, and told him that four or five of his old men might approach, but not the young men, who were too much given to stealing. Upon this permission, four or five elders advanced. The French had the tedious task of entertaining them till daybreak, when they gladly dismissed them.

After the departure of the unwelcome guests, the ship carpenters found they had been robbed. This was a serious matter, as they knew they would suffer such thefts every night if the Indians were not punished. La Salle started out at the head of his men, and soon had the good luck to capture a solitary Indian hunter. He put him under guard, then went out again with two of his men and arrested another Indian. He showed him the one under arrest, and sent him back to tell his people he would kill their comrade if they did not return what they had stolen in the night.

The request embarrassed the Foxes considerably, since they had cut up the coat into small pieces and divided it among them. Being unable to return it, they thought they had better fight, and the next morning they all appeared armed with bows and arrows and a few guns. They were separated from the peninsula on which the French were camping by a long, sandy plain, about two gun-shots wide, at the end of which toward the woods were several small mounds. La Salle stationed himself on the highest of these, with five of his men, who carried their blankets half rolled round their left arms to shield them from the Indian arrows.

It was the first Indian fight for most of them,

and Hennepin says some of the younger men grew pale. There were fourteen of them, including the three friars, against one hundred and twenty screeching savages. Hennepin himself was, according to his own account, bold as a lion, and walked out into the midst of the fray unarmed, to encourage the men. One of the French, in a sudden burst of courage, went up to an Indian who wore a band of red cloth around his head, and tore it from him, signifying to him that he had stolen it from the French. The Indians were so impressed by this bravery that they decided to make peace, and two of their elders, carrying the calumet, advanced, and on assurance that they would not be harmed, explained the reason of their being unable to return the coat. They offered to restore what was whole, and to pay for the remainder. They presented some beaver skins to La Salle, afterwards fulfilled what they had promised, and peace was restored.

The next day was spent in a celebration of this happy event. Dances, feasts, and speeches formed the entertainment, while the Indians tried by every means in their power to make their newly-gained friends stay with them and not go down to visit the nation of the Illinois. They told them that the Illinois wished to massacre all the French,

adding that the Illinois had been told by an Iroquois they had taken captive that the French had urged the Iroquois on to war against them. This information troubled La Salle, since it confirmed what he had already been told by Indians all along his route. His enemies were apparently taking such desperate means as this to rouse the Illinois against him, even though such a course was fatal to the interests of New France; but he tried to believe that the jealousy of the Foxes for the Illinois was in some degree at the root of what they said, and that they were trying to prevent him from going there because they did not wish them to trade with the Illinois. He therefore thanked the savages, but answered that the French were "spirits" who did not fear the Illinois and would bring them to reason either by friendly means or forcible ones.

On the 1st of November they all reëmbarked and went on toward the St. Joseph River, where Tonty was to meet them with twenty men, coming by way of the eastern shore; but when they reached the rendezvous there was no sign of him. Winter was near, and the party was anxious to reach the villages of the Illinois before the savages separated for their winter hunting, in order that they might get food from them, as they had little

with them and were likely to starve. But La Salle was deaf to all pleas; he determined to wait for Tonty; and in spite of the remonstrances of his men, he set them to work at felling trees for building a fort. This work kept them busy nearly all of the month of November, while La Salle's faithful Indian hunter succeeded in killing plenty of bears for their meat. The friars made a bark chapel in which they held services; but in vain Fathers Gabriel and Hennepin preached on alternate Sundays and holidays, "choosing the most impressive matters to exhort our men to patience and perseverance." The men still grumbled, and La Salle was consumed with anxiety about the fate of the *Griffin* and the delay of Tonty and his party.

At length, to the joy of all, Tonty appeared, on the 20th of November. He brought them a welcome present of venison, but only half the number of men they expected. He had left the others behind, hunting, as provisions had failed. Soon after, however, these arrived and at last the party was ready to go on.

But what had become of the *Griffin?* It was more than time for her to have returned; yet Tonty said they had heard nothing of her at Mackinac, or from any Indians along the way. More

and more the fear that she was lost gained upon the mind of La Salle. There was no use in waiting longer; already a thin ice had formed on the St. Joseph River. On December 3d they started again, thirty men in eight canoes, and went up the river to about the site of South Bend. At this place began the portage over the narrow watershed which separates the great basin of the St. Lawrence from that of the Mississippi.[1] It was only one and a half leagues in length, and led through a desolate plain covered with buffalo horns and bones, left by the Indians after their hunting.

[1] "This portage path between the rivers is now obliterated by railroads, paved streets, furrows, graves, factories and dwellings; but down by the St. Joseph River there stands a withered cedar, perhaps several hundred years old, which bears scars that are believed to be the blaze marks of the broad-bladed axes of the French explorers — made to indicate the place where the portage out of the river began. . . .

"What traffic in temporal and spiritual things was here carried on, is intimated by relics of that century found in the fields not far away, where for many years a French mission house stood with enough of a military garrison to invite for it the name 'Fort St. Joseph.' In the room of the Northern Indiana Historical Society at this portage there are to be seen some of these relics, sifted from the dirt and sand; crucifixes, knives, awls, beads, — which I am told are clearly the loot of ancient Roman cities, traded to the Indians for hides, — iron rings, nails and hinges — these with flint arrow-heads and axes, relics of the first munitions of the stone and iron ages out on the edges of civilization." — John Finley, "The French in the Heart of America," page 253.

As they were walking along the trail, single file, a man named Du Plessis raised his gun with the intention of shooting La Salle in the back, but was persuaded not to by one of his comrades. This incident was significant as showing the ill-will some of La Salle's men bore him, an ill-will due partly to his own sternness, partly to the unavoidable hardships of the journeys, and partly to the often vicious character of the men themselves.

Soon they saw a tiny creek (the beginning of the Kankakee River) gathering itself out of the rivulets of the swamp; in a short time it grew large and deep enough to float their burdened canoes. They slid them into the water and embarked, well pleased with the knowledge that at last they were on a current which was running, not toward the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but toward the Gulf of Mexico.

Their progress at first was slow, the creek winding so that sometimes they made only two leagues in a whole day of paddling. At night they had to camp and light their fires on frozen hummocks of earth, the nearest approach to dry places in the swampy lands. Finally they came upon the prairie country, green and beautiful in summer, but now black from fires and strewn with buffalo

bones.[1] The game had nearly all been scared away from this region, and for sixty leagues the hunters killed only one lean stag, a small deer, some swans, and two wild geese, as food for thirty-two men. Fires on the horizon showed that the Indians were hunting buffalo, and if they had had a chance, La Salle's men would have deserted to them for the sake of the fat buffalo meat.

These Indians were accustomed to gather in great numbers near a herd of buffaloes and set fire to the grass all around the animals, except in a path which they left on purpose. The buffaloes, trying to escape from the fire, would take to this path, and were killed in great numbers by the arrows of the hunters. Afterwards it was the duty of the squaws to bring in the meat. Father Hennepin declares that some of them at times carried three hundred pounds of meat, with their children on top of the load, as easily as a soldier carries a sword at his side.

Hennepin devotes pages to descriptions of the buffaloes. "On the heads and between the horns

[1] Buffaloes have of course long since disappeared from this region, but their remains were often found by the early settlers in Illinois. Mr. James Clark, of Utica, Illinois, told Francis Parkman that he once found a large quantity of their bones and skulls in one place, as if a herd had perished in a snowstorm.

they have long black hair which falls over their eyes and gives them a fearful look. . . . The meat of these animals is very succulent. They are very fat in autumn, because all the summer they are up to their necks in the grass. These vast countries are so full of prairies that it seems this is the element and country of the buffalo. . . . They follow one another on the way sometimes for a league. They all lie down in the same place, and their resting-ground is often full of wild purslain, which we have sometimes eaten. The paths by which they have passed are beaten like our great roads in Europe, and no grass grows there. . . . When the cows are killed, the little calves follow the hunters and lick their fingers. They take them home for the Indian children to play with. They preserve the hoofs of all these little animals, dry them, and fasten them to rods, and in their dances they shake and rattle them."

All during December the explorers continued down the Kankakee and the Illinois, into which the Kankakee flows. They still had trouble in finding game, and were nearly starved, when, by great good luck, they found and killed an enormous buffalo mired in a swamp, which it took twelve men to drag to solid ground with a cable. At last, at the end of the month, they reached the great vil-

lage of the Illinois, near the present village of Utica, Illinois, visited years before by the priest Marquette. As they had expected, it was now silent and deserted, all of the tribe being away hunting.

This village consisted of sixty-four cabins, made like long arbors, and covered with woven rushes. Each cabin held places for four or five fires, around each of which one or two families gathered, when home.

The burning question with our voyagers was their lack of provisions. According to their custom, the Indians had buried corn in "caches," or holes in the ground, which the French soon found, but as this corn was exceedingly precious to the savages, who depended on it for food when they returned from their winter hunting, and for the spring planting, the French hesitated to help themselves to it.

Nevertheless, when starvation urges, all other considerations must give way. La Salle resolved to take about thirty bushels from the subterranean hoard, hoping to appease the Indians by some means or other when he met them.

They went on down the river. On New Year's Day the three priests embraced each of the company in the French fashion, and Hennepin, in

what he calls "the most touching words," exhorted the men to be patient, have confidence in God, and not give up the discovery. Thus did the little band of Frenchmen begin the year 1680 that was to see the first civilized foothold on the savage plains of the Illinois.

CHAPTER VIII

"Fort Heartbreak"

Lake Peoria, which is really a widening of the Illinois River, was then called Lake Pimiteoui, a name which signified that there were plenty of fat beasts in the neighborhood. La Salle's party were crossing the body of water thus favorably described, when they saw smoke not far away. They rightly guessed it came from some of the Illinois, and held themselves in readiness for defense.

The next day, upon rounding a point, they came full on the Illinois camp. Canoes were drawn up on both banks, warriors were sprawling in the sun, and eighty or more cabins were swarming with Indian families. As La Salle and his men had kept out of sight behind the point until within half a gun-shot, the surprise of the savages was complete. The French, at La Salle's order, formed in a line of eight canoes abreast, La Salle and Tonty being in those nearest the shores. As they had been warned that this tribe would be unfriendly,

all the men carried their guns in their hands, in readiness for defense, allowing their canoes meanwhile to drift with the current.

There was great consternation in the Indian camp at the sight of the armed white strangers. Warriors reached for their bows and arrows, women and children screamed and scuttled away to the protection of the woods. Before the warriors had time to recover themselves, the French canoes had touched land. La Salle was the first to leap ashore.

They were but a handful of Frenchmen against several thousand savages, but their arms gave them a considerable advantage. La Salle, however, did not wish to take the offensive, for he knew that the success of his trip depended on making friends with these tribes. He now halted to give the Indians time to recover themselves. One of the chiefs noticed this, and called to the young men not to shoot. Presently two of the chiefs appeared on the top of some rising ground carrying the peace pipe; the Indians across the river followed suit.

The French at once made them understand by signs that they desired peace. Hennepin says that he and Father Zenobe Membré proceeded in haste toward the squaws and papooses who had

taken flight, and with winning smiles and gestures dispelled their fear as far as possible, though some of them were so frightened that it was two or three days before they returned from their hiding-places.

The delighted Illinois now gave up the day to rejoicings, dances, and feasts in honor of their unexpected guests. Through their interpreter the French told them that they had come to be their friends; to which the Indians replied in a great chorus of voices, "Tepatoui Nicki," "See, that is good, my brother, you have a mind well-made to conceive this thought." At the same time the hospitable savages took their guests near the fire and rubbed their legs down to the soles of the feet with bear's oil and buffalo grease to take away their fatigue. When the feast began, the master of ceremonies, as in Marquette's time, put the first three mouthfuls of meat in their mouths in a flattering if unappetizing manner.

After the feast La Salle presented them with some tobacco and axes, and explained about taking their corn from the caches in the deserted village. As it had not yet been touched, he offered to replace it, if they desired him to do so, but said that he would rather exchange it for axes and other things the Indians needed. If the Illinois did not wish to provide them with food, the French would

go on to another tribe near by, the Osages, leaving with the latter the blacksmith, whose services were much in demand for the mending of axes and other tools.

The Illinois eagerly promised to give the French all they could, as they were anxious to prevent their going to the other tribe. They begged the French to settle among them.

La Salle answered through the interpreter that he would willingly do so, but that first he wished to build a great wooden canoe to go to the sea and bring them goods by a shorter, easier way, and he asked them to tell him if the river was navigable to the sea, and whether other Europeans lived near its mouth.

The Illinois answered that navigation down the Mississippi to the sea was easy, and told him much about the great size and beauty of the river. They mentioned four tribes, the "Tula, Casquin, Cicaca and Daminoia," in whose names La Salle thought he recognized some that had been spoken of in Ferdinand de Soto's "Relations." The Illinois added that "prisoners whom they had taken in war in the direction of the sea, said that they had seen ships far out which made discharges like thunder, but that these ships had not left settlers on the coast." They assented also to La

Salle's plan of building a fort near them, in order to protect them in case of an Iroquois attack.

All so far had gone as merrily as a marriage bell, but that very night an incident occurred which showed how subtle and ingenious were the methods of La Salle's enemies, who could reach him even here in the untrodden wilderness by means of their relations with the Indian tribes. During the night a chief of the Mascoutens, by the name of Monso, visited the Illinois camp while the French were sleeping, called a council of the chiefs, and assured them that the French were enemies in disguise; that they were in league with the Iroquois, in whose country they had a fort, that they furnished the Iroquois with arms and powder, and they had come with the idea of betraying the Illinois into their hands. Monso said that the only way for the Illinois to avoid certain destruction was to prevent, or at least delay, the voyage of the French down the river, in which case most of their men would desert. After filling the minds of the Illinois with distrust, the strange chief returned by night as secretly as he had come.

Luckily La Salle had made a firm friend in one of the Illinois chiefs, who now came quietly to his camp and told him all that had happened. La

Salle thanked him and gave him a present. Then he consulted with others in his party as to what they should do.

That it was the work of some of La Salle's enemies was plain, for the chief Monso, who had never been within four hundred leagues of Fort Frontenac, nevertheless spoke as if well informed about affairs in Canada. The effect of his speech, both on the Illinois and on La Salle's own party, was greatly to be feared, for Indians are naturally suspicious and La Salle's men were only too ready to desert at the first breath of opposition.

They were soon to find out that their fears were justified. Nicanapé, a chief, summoned them to a council. When they all were seated in the cabin, he made an address very different from that which they had heard on their arrival. He told them he had not invited them so much to give them good cheer as to cure their minds of the disease they had, of wishing to descend the great river. He said that no one had ever yet gone down without perishing; that its banks were inhabited by an infinite number of barbarous nations; that the river was full of monsters; and that the lower part of it contained falls and precipices, with a current above them so violent that they and their boats would be drawn down helplessly; that all

these falls ended in a gulf where the river was lost underground.

He vouched for these things with so many details and such an appearance of sincerity that La Salle's men were completely taken in. La Salle saw the fear in their faces, but as it was against all etiquette to interrupt an Indian speech, he said nothing till Nicanapé had finished.

Then he quietly answered him, thanking him for the information, and saying that they should gain all the more glory if there were difficulties to be overcome; that they were all serving the Great Master of men, and the greatest of all chiefs who commanded beyond the sea; that they would think themselves happy to die while bearing the names of both to the very end of the earth. However, he added unexpectedly, he feared all they had told them was only an invention of his friendship to prevent their leaving his nation; or rather that it was only an artifice of some evil spirit who had given them a distrust of their plans. If the Illinois had any real friendship for them, they ought not to conceal the cause of their uneasiness, which they (the French) could easily remove. Otherwise the French would have reason to believe that the friendship the Illinois showed them on their arrival dwelt only on their lips.

Nicanapé was disconcerted at these remarks, and unable to reply. Like many another more civilized host, he took refuge in pressing food upon his guests and changing the subject of conversation.

After the meal La Salle spoke again. He was not surprised, he said, that their neighbors were jealous of the advantages trade with the French would give them; nor that they should spread reports to the damage of the French; but he was astonished that the Illinois should believe them, and then conceal what they had learned from the French.

"We were not asleep, my brothers," said La Salle, addressing Nicanapé, "when Monso spoke to you in secret at night to the prejudice of the French. . . . The presents that he made to convince you are still secreted in this cabin. Why did he take flight immediately afterwards? Why did he not show himself by day, if he had only truth to tell? Have you not seen that on our arrival we might have killed your nephews, and that in the confusion prevailing among them, we might have done alone what they wish to persuade you we will execute with the help of the Iroquois? . . . Run after this impostor, whom we will wait here to convict and confound. How does

he know me, since he has never seen me, and how can he know the plots which he says I have formed with the Iroquois, since he knows them as little as he does us? Look at our stores, they are only tools and goods that can but serve us to do you good, and which are not suitable either for attacking or retreating."

The Illinois were greatly taken aback. Influenced by what seemed to them supernatural knowledge on the part of La Salle, they sent runners to find and bring back Monso. These returned without him, a heavy snow having fallen during the night and completely obliterated his footsteps.

The effect of the occurrence upon La Salle's men was as he had feared. Nicanapé's speech, which some of their number understood and translated to the rest, frightened them greatly. Next morning, when La Salle came out of his tent, he found that the six sentinels on guard during the night had fled. They included two pit-sawyers, men very necessary for the building of the vessel in which they planned to finish the exploration. La Salle roused the rest and questioned them as to what they knew of the desertion, but could find out nothing. He told them not to let the Indians know of the desertion, but to say the

men had gone at his orders, for he did not wish the savages to guess the treachery in his party. The desertion, says Parkman, cut him to the heart, for it showed him that he was leaning on a broken reed, and he felt there were scarcely four men in the party he could trust.[1]

The men opposed to him had not stopped even at desertion. A second attempt to kill him was made by some of the deserters, who put poison in his kettle. This was an epoch when poisoning was continually being practiced in Europe, by persons of very high ranks of society, as well as by acknowledged criminals. It was, in fact, a favorite industry of those who had enemies they wished out of the way; and surrounded as La Salle was by

[1] "In these early French enterprises in the West, it was to the last degree difficult to hold men to their duty. Once fairly in the wilderness, completely freed from the sharp restraints of authority in which they had passed their lives, a spirit of lawlessness broke out among them with a violence proportioned to the pressure which had hitherto controlled it. Discipline had no resources and no guarantee; while those outlaws of the forest, the *coureurs de bois*, were always before their eyes, a standing example of unbridled license. La Salle, eminently skilful in his dealings with Indians, was rarely so happy with his own countrymen; and yet the desertions from which he was continually suffering were due more to the inevitable difficulty of his position than to any want of conduct." — Parkman, "La Salle, and the Discovery of the Great West," pages 155, 156.

rough characters, worked on probably by secret influence from his enemies in Canada, there was small wonder that he suffered from it. His life was saved by an antidote he had brought with him from France. The attempt, however, is significant in view of his after-history.

Since he found it was impossible to rely on his men, he determined to remove them from the Indian camp, where they were in constant danger of being frightened by the Indians' stories. Giving as a reason the possibility of an Iroquois attack, he set them to work fortifying a place some distance from the village, which, being on a peninsula, could be easily defended. He called the fort "Crèvecœur," or "Heartbreak," truly an odd choice for a man seeking to reassure his followers, but one that proved only too prophetic. It is thought, however, that he did not name it in reference to his own feelings, but after a fortress in Holland which had lately been destroyed by the French, and at the siege of which Tonty had been present.

It had snowed for twenty days, an occurrence most unusual for that part of the country, the Indians told them; but on the 15th of January a great thaw set in. Building could now be begun. As at first no one in the party would take the place of the pit-sawyers who had deserted, La

Salle himself went at the back-breaking task of using the whipsaw; after which some of the men volunteered to go on with the work as well as they could. A forge was set up, the blacksmith went to work, trees were cut down, while fort-building and ship-building went on apace. This ship, of course, was for the descent of the Mississippi. The religious concerns of the French were not neglected. The three friars built themselves a bark chapel, where the company gathered for morning and evening prayers every day, and sermons and vespers on Sundays.

By March the fort was almost finished, the keel of the ship was made, and the sheathing sawed and ready to put in place; but rigging, sails, and iron for the ship were lacking. These things were aboard the *Griffin*, but, alas, where was she?

La Salle now formed a desperate resolution.

It was March — the worst season in the year for traveling. The country north of them was covered with snow which was neither melted nor hard enough to bear a man on snowshoes. Rivers were swollen, winds were piercing, the weather at its harshest. Yet, in spite of all these difficulties, La Salle determined to make his way back to Canada, to get supplies which would enable them to go on down the Mississippi.

Before he left, the fears of his followers at Fort Crèvecœur were reassured after this fashion. One of the Illinois who had been hunting toward the south returned in the spring, reaching Fort Crèvecœur before he arrived at the village. La Salle detained him by giving him a turkey he had just shot, and while the Indian cooked and ate it, questioned him about the lower part of the Mississippi. The Illinois, who knew nothing of what had been going on in the village during his absence, told him the truth and assured him that there were no obstacles except sand bars on the Mississippi between them and the sea. La Salle gave him a present and pledged him to secrecy as to what he had said. He then paid the chiefs a visit in the village, finding them engaged in the congenial occupation of feasting on bear-meat. He sat down with them, and after a short time began to speak. He reproached them with having deceived him about the Mississippi, and told them that he had been instructed by the Master of Life about the river. Then he described it so accurately that the chiefs clapped their hands to their mouths in amazement, thinking truly he was a "spirit." They confessed that he spoke the truth in every respect, and gave as an excuse for having deceived him the great desire they had to

keep him and the "Gray Gowns," or "Bare Feet," as they called the friars, in their country.

This account of the Mississippi was further confirmed by some of the southern tribes — Osages, Chickasaws, and Arkansas — who came up about this time from the lower Mississippi, for the purpose of seeing the French and trading with them for the axes which they eagerly coveted. They said that the river was navigable to the sea, and that all the nations along its banks would smoke the calumet and dance the peace dance for them.

Tonty was to be in charge of the fort during La Salle's absence. La Salle also resolved to send two men by the name of Accau and Du Gay with Father Hennepin to explore the upper waters of the Mississippi. Hennepin makes himself out the chief of the expedition, but Accau was really in command. Hennepin was not anxious to go at first, as he was not in the best of health, but Father Gabriel urged him to undertake the journey.

"It is true, my son," said the good old man, "that you will have many monsters to overcome, and precipices to pass in this enterprise, which demands the strength of the most robust. You do not know a word of the language of these nations, whom you are going to try and gain to

God, but courage, you will gain as many victories as combats."

Hennepin, reflecting on the good example Father Gabriel [1] had set him, in risking his life at his age on this perilous mission, consented. The hardy friar set out with his two companions on the 29th of February. All the company were gathered in the melting snow of the river bank to see them off. La Salle, with the air of authority so necessary in this rough company that it had become second nature to him, gave them formal permission to depart; the white-haired old priest stretched his hands over their heads in blessing; their comrades kissed them on both cheeks in the French fashion; a shove of the paddles, and they were off!

Wild adventures lay before the travelers before they should see any of the party again; but for the present we will leave them and follow the fortunes of their indomitable leader.

[1] Father Gabriel was the only son of a gentleman of Burgundy, says Hennepin, and had given up a comfortable fortune to enter the religious life. He had been Hennepin's superior at a convent in France, and was noted for the great sanctity of his life.

780603

CHAPTER IX

A Terrible Journey

La Salle left the fort early in March with four Frenchmen and one Indian in two canoes. The river was free from ice at the fort, but a few miles beyond it was frozen over. As La Salle wished to keep the canoes so that he could send them back from the Illinois village up the river laden with provisions for the men at the fort, they made sledges upon which to put them and so dragged them over the ice. The next day the ice was too weak to bear their weight, and too heavy for them to make their way through in boats. They accomplished the difficult feat of dragging the canoes and baggage inland through the woods, in snow up to their knees, for ten or twelve miles.

The succeeding days were a repetition of this programme. Sometimes they paddled, always in danger from floating ice; again, they cut their way up the ice-bound river with axes. Sometimes they dragged or carried their canoes and baggage through frozen or half-thawed woods and marshes.

Sometimes they were stopped by snowstorms, sometimes by rains and rapids. After about ten days of this terrible journey, they arrived at the Great Village of the Illinois.

It was still deserted. La Salle's hope of finding some one to take the canoes back to Fort Crèvecœur had almost vanished, when he met three Indians in the neighborhood of the village, who were attracted by the smoke with which La Salle's men were curing some buffalo meat. One of them was named Chassagoac, a chief of the Illinois, and already a friend of the French. La Salle enlisted a promise from him that he would send the provisions back. The chief confirmed what La Salle had already been told about the clear passage down to the Gulf.

They continued their journey that day under the same difficulties. At first the river was fairly open, but it closed up with ice as they went northward. Some days later, a few miles below the site of Joliet, they abandoned it and struck across northern Illinois toward Lake Michigan and the fort at the mouth of the St. Joseph, walking most of the time in snow-water melted by the sun. After four days of this hard traveling they reached a river so deep and rapid that it could not be crossed except on a raft. They made one of green

oak, the only wood available, mixed with bundles of rushes and tied together with withes. It sank under them till they were up to their knees in water, but they managed somehow to reach the other side; three other rivers had to be crossed in the same way. Two days after, they arrived at the mouth of the St. Joseph and found the fort La Salle had built the preceding fall in good condition.

Two men whom La Salle had left behind to look for the *Griffin* were wintering there. They reported that they had been all around the lake but had found no trace of the boat. This was disheartening news for the anxious leader, but it only confirmed his purpose of reaching Canada and then returning to the relief of the expedition. He gave the men orders to make their way to Tonty on the Illinois and sent him instructions by them to erect a fort on a high cliff of yellow sandstone, now called "Starved Rock," which he had noticed near the Illinois village. He and his men pushed on through the snowy woods toward Lake Erie. These woods were so full of brambles and underbrush that their clothes were cut in ribbons and their faces were so torn and bloody they could hardly recognize one another. From now on they met with game in abundance — a pleasant

From a photograph by John Finley.

"STARVED ROCK"

The site of Fort St. Louis

relief from the Indian corn which had been their sole fare.

The abundance of game in this part of the country was due to the avoidance of it by the surrounding tribes of Indians, who were at war with each other. As it was debatable ground, none of these tribes dared to hunt there, but only entered in war parties and with the greatest precautions.

One night as the French, with the exception of a man on guard, were sleeping by the camp fire they had recklessly lighted, they were surrounded by a band of Indians who had discovered their trail. The sentinel awakened the others. Each instantly sprang to his feet and took refuge, Indian fashion, behind a tree, gun in hand. In the dim light the surrounding warriors took them for Iroquois, and thought there must be a large party of them, because they had not hidden their trail, as the Iroquois always did when traveling in small bands. Fearing that they themselves would be surrounded, they fled through the dark woods, and spread such an alarm that the French were not molested again for several days.

La Salle guessed the reason of their flight, and took pains to confirm their wrong impression by lighting fires in reckless profusion, and by making marks on the barks of trees to represent the large

number of captives and scalps which the imaginary Iroquois might be supposed to have taken. After they had crossed a plain, La Salle set fire to the grass in order to destroy their tracks. In a few days, however, they came to great marshes to which this device could not be applied, as they were flooded with melted snow, and they sank in the mud and water up to their waists. Of course they left a trail, which was soon discovered by a band of Mascoutens. These followed them for days through the swamp, but could not locate them because the French were careful to light no fires, even though they had to dry their wet clothes on some mound, while they slept in their blankets.

One night, however, it was so cold that their clothes froze as stiff as boards, and in the morning they had to light a fire to thaw them enough to put on. The Indians saw the fire and ran toward the French uttering war-cries, but were fortunately prevented from coming near by a deep creek that lay between. La Salle advanced to the bank of the creek, gun in hand. The Indians promptly experienced a change of heart, due either to a sight of their guns or to the discovery that they were Frenchmen. They called out that they and the French were brothers, and that they had followed

them because they had mistaken them for Iroquois. Then they beat a hasty retreat.

La Salle and his men pushed on without other interference from savages, but were stopped two days later by the sickness of one of the men — not a surprising occurrence in view of the hardships they had undergone. La Salle, whose health appeared to be equal to all strain,[1] went to look for a river flowing into Lake Erie, down which they could convey the sufferer by canoe. He found one, and they set to work to make a canoe of the bark of an elm tree. At that season the bark could only be removed by boiling water; great pains also had to be taken not to break it. At last the frail craft was finished. They all embarked in it, on a river swollen with spring floods

[1] "In him, an unconquerable mind held at its service a frame of iron, and tasked it to the utmost of its endurance. The pioneer of western pioneers was no rude son of toil, but a man of thought, trained amid arts and letters." . . . "A Rocky Mountain trapper, being complimented on the hardihood of himself and his companions, once said to the writer, 'That's so; but a gentleman of the right sort will stand hardship better than anybody else.' The history of Arctic and African travel, and the military records of all time, are a standing evidence that a trained and developed mind is not the enemy, but the active and powerful ally, of constitutional hardihood. The culture that enervates instead of strengthening is always a false or partial one." — Parkman, "La Salle," pages 182, 183.

and dangerous on account of fallen trees which whirled along with the current or lurked underneath as treacherous snags. The river or creek wound so constantly that in three days they only made a distance equal to what they would have accomplished in a day on foot. Luckily, the sick man soon grew better, so they abandoned the canoe, and, continuing by land, four days later reached the Strait of Detroit.

La Salle's main anxiety was still the fate of the *Griffin*. He directed two of his men to make a canoe, and go to Mackinac to see what they could find out about her. With the other two Frenchmen and the Indian he crossed the strait on a raft. They followed the southern shore of Lake Erie on foot, till stopped by the flooding of the woods through which they walked. The continual soaking and exertion had proved too much for one of the other Frenchmen and even for the Indian. They were attacked by a violent fever, with inflammation of the chest. La Salle and the remaining well man made a canoe in two days, put the sufferers in it, and, embarking on Lake Erie, arrived at Niagara on the day after Easter, the 21st of April.

Small comfort awaited them here. The men who had wintered at the cabin above the falls had no

news of the *Griffin* and it seemed certain that she had been lost; they also told him that a ship which had been sent him from France had foundered in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, with 20,000 livres worth of his goods on board; and that of twenty hired men on their way to join him, only four remained, most of them having returned to France on account of reports spread by his enemies that he would never return, the others having been detained by the Intendant Duchesneau, who was unfriendly to him.

It was more necessary than ever for the fate-beset explorer to reach Fort Frontenac and Montreal quickly, to arrange his affairs. His men were so exhausted that they could not travel further, so La Salle left them at Niagara and pushed on immediately with three fresh ones. They traveled on the lake in continual rain for more than two weeks; and at last, drenched and weary, drew up their canoes under the gray walls of Fort Frontenac.

"It was the most arduous journey," says the old chronicle, "ever made by Frenchmen in America."

CHAPTER X

The Search for Tonty

La Salle had accomplished a journey which broke all records even for those days of heroic travels — and at the end of it he had found only fresh trials, new losses, deadlier treachery. While he was hurrying through his business in Montreal, in order to return with fresh supplies to the Illinois, two men, sent by Tonty, were hastening through the forests to inform him of the blow struck at his settlement there. It had come from within. Nearly all the men left with Tonty had proved traitors and had deserted, first stealing all the goods, furs, arms, and provisions, carrying away what they could and throwing the remainder into the river. Tonty was left practically defenseless, supported only by two priests and three men newly arrived in Canada.

Of all La Salle's great expedition to the Mississippi, nothing was left but Tonty's forlorn band, the little party of three men exploring the upper Mississippi, and La Salle himself. His ships

had foundered, his goods had been stolen or wasted, his credit was hopelessly impaired, his followers had nearly all proved treacherous. But not for a moment did his own courage falter. The first thing to be done was to arrest the deserters; after that, he was more than ever determined to return to the Illinois to rescue Tonty.

The deserters were reported to be approaching Canada by the southern shore of Lake Ontario. La Salle set off immediately from Fort Frontenac in a canoe with nine men, ordering fifteen others to follow him. They posted themselves a little way beyond the Bay of Quinté, on an island which commanded the channel by which the deserters would probably pass.

Soon after they arrived there, two of La Salle's *habitants* from Fort Frontenac, who had been coasting the lake in a canoe, came up to inform him that they had met the deserters, and that these villains, not content with robbing him at Fort Crèvecœur, had destroyed the other fort he had built at the mouth of the St. Joseph River, stolen the furs left at Mackinac, and plundered his store at Niagara. They had separated into two bands; some were striking southward toward Albany, "a common refuge at that time of this class of scoundrels," others were coming toward

Fort Frontenac with the purpose of killing La Salle, and so escaping punishment for what they had done to him.

La Salle immediately led a small party in a canoe to intercept them. They paddled all night long; at daybreak they reached the point where canoes usually made the crossing of the lake. In the dim light of dawn they saw two canoes coming straight toward them. The men in them did not see La Salle's canoe because it was in the shadow of the trees on the shore. La Salle waited till the canoes were near; then fired across the bow of the foremost one, and immediately gave chase, keeping to the rear so that the men in it could not fire except by stopping their paddling and turning around. As La Salle's canoe-men paddled very skillfully, they soon caught up with the deserters and forced the men in both canoes to surrender. La Salle took them to Fort Frontenac, put them in prison there, and went back to catch a third canoe which he heard was approaching.

He found this toward evening, but the men in it would not stop at his hail, and in the firing which ensued La Salle's men killed two. The survivors were put in prison with the others, to await sentence by Frontenac, who was expected to visit the fort shortly. Leaving orders with his

men to watch for the deserters who had gone to Albany, as they would probably return in the spring, La Salle hurried his preparations for going back to Tonty. By the 10th of August all was ready; he had twenty-five men, including carpenters to finish the ship on the stocks at Crèvecœur, and many necessary supplies and goods.

They went this time by the shorter route of the river Humber, Lake Simcoe, and the Severn River to the Georgian Bay of Lake Huron. On the way La Salle met two more of the deserters, one of whom experienced a change of heart and received permission to accompany him again; the other escaped. They had been scouting the lake and confirmed the news of the loss of the *Griffin*. In fact, nothing more was ever heard of the unfortunate ship; but La Salle thought from rumors he heard that the pilot had wrecked her on purpose, and with some of his men escaped and roamed the woods, trading with the Indians on La Salle's goods.

The party reached the Straits of Mackinac about the middle of September. The Indians here had been tampered with by the fur-traders and refused at first to sell La Salle provisions. He succeeded in making them do so only after three weeks' effort. In the meantime he was distressed

at not hearing any news of Tonty. Worse still, rumors reached him that the Iroquois were on the warpath, marching against the Illinois. What chance would Tonty and his few men have in case of an attack by the Iroquois, especially since the Illinois had been told that the French were on the Iroquois side?

La Salle was further detained at Mackinac by the non-arrival of some of his party who were coming by Lake Erie, in order to meet Tonty if he were returning that way. He decided not to wait for them longer. Leaving his lieutenant, La Forest, at the Straits, he went on with twelve other men to the mouth of the St. Joseph. Here he left a part of the number to await La Forest with the heaviest of the baggage, and pushed forward with six Frenchmen and an Indian.

They ascended the St. Joseph, made the portage to the Kankakee, and this time found the prairies alive with buffalo, "now like black specks dotting the distant swells; now trampling by in ponderous columns, or filing in long lines, morning, noon, and night, to drink at the river, — wading, plunging, and snorting in the water; climbing the muddy shores, and staring with wild eyes at the passing canoes." The men were delighted at the abundant hunting, but La Salle saw in the absence

of the savages who usually hunted in these regions an omen of war which made him still more anxious.

Toward the end of October they reached the junction of the Kankakee with the Illinois, and as they found no traces of Tonty's northward passage that way, they hoped he was still at the Illinois village. They stopped three days to hunt, in order to bring plenty of fresh meat to the exiles. After they had killed twelve very fat buffaloes, eight deer, and much small game, they loaded their canoes with the dressed meat and hurried on to give Tonty a joyful surprise.

It was fifteen leagues to the Illinois village. They paddled their canoes swiftly down the favoring current, between strangely silent and deserted shores. As they drew near the Great Village their cheeks paled at the sight they saw. Gone were the great bark cabins, swarming with dusky families. In their places half-charred poles lifted ghastly objects which the French guessed even at a distance to be human heads. Birds of prey hovered over blackened ruins; and as they drew near wolves slunk away from half-eaten meals.

Sick with horror but resolute to find out what had happened, La Salle and his party landed and began a search of the grewsome village. Everywhere were the traces of Iroquois invasion. The

warfare had been waged, apparently, not on the living, but on the dead. The burial-ground of the Illinois had been demolished, according to the Iroquois custom. The subterranean caches of the Illinois were broken open, their contents scattered and destroyed. At one side of the village was a rough fort made by the invaders; La Salle searched it and found a few remnants of French cloth. He examined all the skulls, but found by the coarse hair that they were those of Indians.

One league from the village was a place where Tonty and his men had evidently made a garden. La Salle visited it, and found there six stakes stuck in the ground, each painted red, with a rude drawing on it of a man with eyes bandaged. It was the custom of the Iroquois to put such stakes at places where they had either killed some of their enemies or taken them prisoners. La Salle thought they might have found the six Frenchmen there and made prisoners of them. It was a forlorn hope, but better than none.

Their position in this ravaged country was none too secure, for they found fresh tracks of Indians mingled with those of the invaders of a few weeks previous. Darkness fell; and the cold of the autumn evening was so intense that in spite of the danger they built a great fire. One of their num-

ber went on guard; the rest stretched themselves out to sleep as well as they could in this place of horror and desolation. La Salle could not rest. Terrible pictures floated before his eyes in the darkness. Tonty might have suffered the worst of fates. Yet he resolved to leave no stone unturned to rescue him if rescue were still possible. But which way, up or down the river, had Tonty been carried or fled?

Finally La Salle decided to keep on toward the south, with four men, leaving the others to wait for the remainder of his party, if they should follow. They left the next day, and with every mile of their progress down the deserted river the story of what had happened grew plainer before their eyes.

A few leagues below the village was a peninsula which would have been an island but for a narrow swamp connecting it with the mainland. Here the flying Illinois had taken refuge with their women and children in numerous hastily built huts. On the opposite bank was the camp of the Iroquois, who did not yet strike the blow, but waited, silent and patient as tigers, before springing. La Salle visited both camps but found no traces of the French.

They passed six opposing camps the next day,

before reaching Lake Peoria and Fort Crèvecœur. They found that the fort had been almost entirely destroyed by the deserters, but the ship was still on the stocks, though some of the Indians had torn out the nails, which they valued greatly for arrow-heads. On a piece of board were written the words, "Nous Sommes Tous Sauvages, ce 15 A . . ., 1680." [We Are All Savages, this 15th of A . . ., 1680.] La Salle thought that the *A* stood for Août, August, and that the inscription had been left by Tonty either to show that he had gone to live in the Indian village or that he had passed that way with the Iroquois as a captive. In reality it had been written in April by the deserters, who had indeed become savages.

They went on the next day and passed four camps of the two war-parties. The last one had evidently been made recently, as the cinders had not been rained upon. They traveled all the next night, and the following day they reached the river of La Salle's dreams, the Mississippi. But he had no time to think of his discovery now. Another sight occupied his attention.

In a field at the junction of the rivers, they saw the huts which denoted still another camp of the Illinois. In it were figures like those of men and children, but they were strangely motionless.

La Salle and his men pressed nearer. They landed. It was only too easy now to guess what had happened!

Here the Iroquois had made their long-delayed attack; and their unfortunate enemies had suffered every torture that the cruelest among Indians could devise. There were many horrible marks of the conquerors' vengeance.

Even here La Salle found courage to look for evidences of the French having been with them, but there were none. His men offered to go with him down the Mississippi to complete his discovery, but La Salle was so disturbed over the fate of his friend that he had no heart for the enterprise. Moreover, he thought their party too small in number and too ill-provided with arms and goods to go into the countries of unknown tribes.

They paddled up the river again, arriving at the site of the Great Village a few days later. The river was now frozen over. After a few days spent in gathering Indian corn from the ravaged fields, they made sledges and went northward along the river on the ice.

Again they came to the junction of the Kankakee and Illinois rivers, where they had looked before for signs of Tonty; but this time they followed the northern branch, reasoning that if

Tonty were alive he must have gone this way, since he had evidently not taken the other route. Their persistency was rewarded. Less than a day's journey from the junction they came upon a camping place where they found a piece of wood which to their experienced eyes told the whole story. It had been cut by a saw! Almost certain evidence that Tonty had passed that way!

It was January by this time. Cheered though La Salle was by the trace of his friend, his cheer could not keep him warm in the bitter cold that followed. Snow fell for nineteen days, driven by a stinging wind. They could find scarcely any wood for their fires, and none of the bark with which they were accustomed to make huts to shelter themselves. The driven snow was too soft to snowshoe over, but very deep. La Salle, as usual, led the way, to encourage the men, and often sank in snow up to his waist. He himself admitted that he had never endured such cold and hardship.

At length, toward the end of January, they reached the fort on the St. Joseph. La Salle had hoped to find Tonty there; but there was no one but La Forest with the men who had been left behind on the way down. It was some consolation to La Salle to find them still faithful to him, and

usefully employed in building a ship, clearing the ground, and other industries. It was necessary now that he should gain a foothold here with the Miami Indians, since his plans for the Illinois appeared to be defeated, and he decided to use all his efforts for the present to accomplish this. In the meantime, he sent messengers to the Straits, to see if they could bring him any news of Tonty.

CHAPTER XI

Tonty and the Iroquois

We have followed La Salle in his fruitless journey of rescue. Let us now watch with Tonty while the Iroquois warriors approach nearer and nearer to the doomed village of the Illinois.

While the men were deserting and pillaging Fort Crèvecœur, Tonty had gone, according to La Salle's orders, to look over and fortify the high rock near the village. Father Membré was living in the Indian village with a chief who had adopted him as his son, and was trying, with small success, to make the savages understand the rudiments of Christianity. Old Father Gabriel had been left by the deserters halfway between Crèvecœur and the village when they fled, and two more men, Boisrondet and Lesperance, not being in the plot, had been left behind with him.

These found Tonty and told him what had happened. He at once sent messengers to La Salle and retired with his small party to the Illinois

village, to pass the winter as best they might, living on the hospitality of the Indians.

Father Membré, after his unsuccessful efforts to convert them, had a very poor opinion of the characters and intelligence of his hosts. He calls them "wandering, idle, fearful and desolate, almost without respect for their chiefs, irritable and thievish . . . very superstitious, although they have no religious worship . . . much given to play, like all the Indians in America."

Tonty was less critical or perhaps understood better what they could and could not learn. He busied himself during the winter in teaching them to use firearms and to defend themselves by palisades. He even helped them build a kind of rough fort, with intrenchments — the same that La Salle had seen. He also did his best to make them believe that La Salle would return, and talked much of the benefits his descent of the Mississippi would bring them.

These efforts were soon overbalanced by persistent rumors, brought by visiting Indians, probably sent from the Straits of Mackinac by La Salle's enemies, that La Salle was dead. Even Tonty was almost convinced by them. The visitors said, as Monso had, that La Salle had come to the country of the Illinois to betray them

to the Iroquois. At the time La Salle's enemies were circulating this rumor, they were themselves stirring up the Iroquois to make war on the Illinois, in order to defeat La Salle's projects there.

The Illinois began to be suspicious of Tonty, and he had resolved that the best thing for him to do would be to go to the Straits and confront the originators of the falsehoods, when an alarm was raised which made his leaving impossible. A Shawnee, who had started to go to his country, brought word that the Iroquois army was drawing near! All was confusion and fright in the Illinois camp. Squaws and children screamed; the warriors swarmed around Tonty, with murderous eyes, saying he had betrayed them. Tonty swore that he and his young men would help them in the fight, and die with them if necessary. This reassured them somewhat. They sent out scouts who reported that the Iroquois, reënforced with the Miamis, whom they had persuaded to join them, numbered from six hundred to seven hundred men. The Illinois sent their wives and children down the river to the peninsula La Salle had seen, with warriors to guard them. Then the remainder of the braves passed the night in painting their faces, befeathering their hair, feasting, yelling, stamping, and brandishing their

hatchets, to work themselves up to the crisis. Morning came, "and with it came the Iroquois"!

With fiendish whoops and yells the Illinois braves ran out across the plain to give them battle. But in spite of their warlike show they were all for peace. Many of their warriors were away hunting, making their number less than that of the Iroquois; and besides that, they were armed only with bows and arrows, while the Iroquois had guns secured from Dutch and English traders, and they well knew how to use them. The chief of the Illinois begged Tonty to go over to the Iroquois side and persuade them to make peace. It was a wildly dangerous errand, but Tonty consented. The Iroquois were supposed to be at peace with the French, and if they thought he was a Frenchman they might spare him.

Tonty laid aside his gun and walked forward holding up a bead necklace as sign of peace. The Iroquois yelled and continued to fire hotly upon them. At first two Frenchmen and an Illinois advanced with Tonty, but the affair became a little too exciting for them, and they dropped back. Parkman, who drew his local color from his own experience in an Indian fight, describes the scene as follows:—

"A moment more, and he was among the in-

furiated warriors. It was a frightful spectacle, — the contorted forms, bounding, crouching, twisting, to deal or dodge the shot; the small keen eyes that shone like an angry snake's; the parted lips pealing their fiendish yells; the painted features writhing with fear and fury, and every passion of an Indian fight."

They thought Tonty an Indian from his dark skin and half-savage dress and crowded angrily around him. A young brave drove a knife into his side; others tore off his coat and put his hat on the end of a gun. He had abandoned all hope, when a chief called out that he must be a Frenchman because his ears were not pierced.

Several of the chiefs then rescued him and led him to an impromptu council at the rear of the army. Sitting on the ground in a circle, they put him in the middle of the ring, and questioned him as to who he was and how he came there. As he was answering them, a great noise was made by the remainder of the Iroquois. It appeared that the French and Illinois, seeing Tonty's hat raised on a gun, thought he had been killed, and had summoned up courage to attack the Iroquois in revenge. This of course made Tonty's position still more dangerous. "I assure you," he wrote afterwards, "that never have I been so embarrassed,

for at the time when they brought this news there was behind me an Iroquois who held a knife in his hand and from time to time lifted up my hair from behind. I thought thenceforward there would be no quarter for me and that the greatest hope that I could have was that they would knock me over the head, for I thought they would burn me."

However, the chiefs again interposed between him and his would-be assassin, in order to question him about the number of Illinois and French with them. Tonty "supposed" their number to be eleven hundred, with fifty Frenchmen, when there were in reality only about five hundred Indians and three Frenchmen, not counting the priests.

The wily Iroquois were a trifle dismayed and concluded to postpone the attack. They gave Tonty a necklace in sign of peace, and told him to go and ask the Illinois to give them food. Bleeding from his wound, and hardly believing in his own miraculous escape, he staggered across the short plain separating the two armies. On the way he met Father Membré, who had just learned of the combat (he and Father Gabriel had been going through their devotions in a retreat some distance away from the village) and who was bravely hastening to give what spiritual aid he could in case Tonty was still alive.

The Illinois began to retreat to their village, but the treacherous Iroquois, in spite of the truce, which was really only a ruse to gain time, followed them as fast as they retreated. The Illinois wished to send Tonty back to remonstrate with them, but he was so faint from loss of blood that he could not go, so they sent Father Membré instead. The Father did not care much about this errand, in spite of the excellent chance of martyrdom it offered. The enemy, however, did not hurt him. They repeated their assurance that all they wanted was food, but they did not stop their advance, and reached the Illinois village before the Illinois themselves did. Then they began to intrench themselves in the fort, to desecrate the graveyard, and to do every insolent thing they could think of to make the Illinois quarrel with them.

The Illinois meanwhile retired to the island down the river where they had sent their women. Instead of fleeing further, as they should have done, they foolishly trusted in the assurances of the enemy, and stayed in the neighborhood. The Iroquois were still uncertain as to how many of them there were, and therefore delayed striking the blow. Tonty and the priests remained at the village. While the Iroquois pretended to be negotiating for peace, Tonty managed to send word to

the Illinois that the Iroquois intended treachery and that they had better flee while they could. The latter grew suspicious of him, especially when they found out from an Illinois captive that he had greatly exaggerated the number of the Illinois. One evening the chiefs sent for Tonty and Membré, handed them six packages of beaver skins, and told Tonty it was a present to heal the wound he had received from one of their warriors. It was also a gentle hint for him to take his leave.

Tonty asked them when they would go away and leave the Illinois in peace. The chiefs answered ferociously that they intended to eat the Illinois! Tonty kicked away the furs with his foot — the deadliest insult one could offer to an Indian — and told them that since they meant to eat Frontenac's children he would have none of their presents! Then the chief who had spoken before took him by the arm and told him to go, and they all began to sing their war-songs.

Tonty felt that he had done all he could for the Illinois, and that to stay longer with the Iroquois was suicide. He and the other two Frenchmen found a leaky canoe on the river bank, and embarked in it without loss of time. Before they left, the wily Iroquois insisted upon Tonty's writing a letter to Frontenac, and leaving it with them,

as a proof for them to show that they had not killed them. In fact, the awe they felt toward Onontio, as they called the governor, and Tonty's own bravery, were probably the only reasons why they had spared him.

The party stopped a short distance up the river to dry their clothes and furs, which had become wet in their worthless craft. Devout old Father Gabriel went off into the woods to repeat his prayers in seclusion. The early autumn darkness came on, and he had not returned. The others grew alarmed, followed up his trail, and soon found it mingled with the tracks of many others, presumably Indians. They kept watch on the other side of the river all night, and saw some Indians come and make a fire in their camp. The next day they went over and searched again, but met no one. They continued on their journey, mourning the good old man, who had undoubtedly either been killed or taken captive. As a matter of fact, they found out later that he had been murdered by a band of Kickapoos, who took his scalp and carried away his devotional books, which they probably thought were charms. They afterwards came into the hands of a Jesuit priest.

The party was now to endure hardships which made their stay with the Illinois seem a life of ease

by comparison. For some reason they thought they would go to the Pottawattamie village on the shores of Green Bay instead of returning to the fort at the mouth of the St. Joseph. They therefore went up the Des Plaines River, which was the reason La Salle had not seen any trace of them when he came down on the Kankakee. Tonty fell sick of a fever, which caused his limbs and body to swell so that it was agony for him to walk. This delayed them a long while, as they had been obliged to abandon their worthless canoe and were traveling northward by land. Soon the hunting failed, owing to the lateness of the season. They lived on wild garlic and roots which they dug from the frozen ground with their fingers.

Finally the starved men reached the Pottawattamie village only to find it deserted by the savages, who had gone over toward Green Bay. They had left a store of rotten pumpkins, however, which our travelers eagerly seized. They were even reduced to eating the rawhide straps which bound together the poles of the Indian tepees, and carried away a shield of rawhide to sustain them during their march to Green Bay.

The Sieur de Boisrondet had lost his way and been separated from the party for about ten days before they reached the Pottawattamie village.

They had given him up for dead. Just as they were leaving, they heard a voice at a little distance in a cabin by the river where they had put the store of pumpkins. It was Boisrondet, who had arrived there three days before without their knowing it, and thinking the pumpkins had been left there especially for him, had made great havoc with them. During his separation from them, he had carried a gun, but had no bullets or flint. He had melted a tin cup to make bullets, fired the gun with a coal, and in this way killed a turkey, which saved him from utter starvation.

Finally reaching the shore of Green Bay, they found an old canoe and took possession of it; whereupon, says Tonty, "there rose a northwest wind, which lasted five days, with driving snow. We consumed all our food; and not knowing what to do next, we resolved to go back to the deserted town, and die by a warm fire in one of the wigwams. On our way, we saw a smoke; but our joy was short, for when we reached the fire we found nobody there. We spent the night by it; and before morning the bay froze. We tried to break a way for our canoe through the ice, but could not; and therefore we determined to stay there another night, and make moccasins in order to reach the town. We made some out of Father Gabriel's

cloak. I was angry with Etienne Renault for not finishing his; but he excused himself on account of illness, because he had a great oppression of the stomach, caused by eating a piece of an Indian shield of rawhide, which he could not digest.

"His delay proved our salvation; for the next day, December fourth, as I was urging him to finish the moccasins, and he was still excusing himself on the score of his malady, a party of Kiskakon Ottawas, who were on their way to the Pottawattamies, saw the smoke of our fire, and came to us. We gave them such a welcome as was never seen before. They took us into their canoes, and carried us to an Indian village only two leagues off. There we found five Frenchmen, who received us kindly, and all the Indians seemed to take pleasure in sending us food; so, after thirty-four days of starvation, we found our famine turned to abundance."

This was a Pottawattamie village under the influence of the same chief who had entertained La Salle and his men on his journey the year before, just before La Salle had sent the *Griffin* on the errand from which she was never to return. It was the identical chief who knew only three great captains, Frontenac, La Salle, and himself. Perhaps he now added Tonty to his list!

CHAPTER XII

La Salle's Oration to the Indians

While Tonty was wintering with the Pottawattamies, La Salle was going back and forth in the neighborhood of the St. Joseph River, forming a confederacy with various Indian tribes with which he hoped to keep the Iroquois in check. Hearing that some of the Illinois were returning to their country, he started out toward their region to influence them. They traveled on snowshoes over a hard, glittering crust, the glare from which was so intense that La Salle went snow-blind for three days, suffering such acute pain that he could not rest either day or night. One of his men went to look for pine needles, a lotion made from them being considered a cure for this affliction. He returned with the pine needles and the news that he had met a large number of Outagamies, or Foxes, who told them the welcome news that Tonty was safe with the Pottawattamies and that Father Louis Hennepin and the men with him had come back from the country of the Sioux.

Either joy at this news or the pine-needle decoction cured La Salle's eyes. He went on, met some Illinois and told them of his plans for their protection, sent a canoe up the Des Plaines with supplies for Tonty, and returned to Fort St. Joseph.

On arriving there he learned that a large delegation of the New England Indians were waiting to speak with him at the village of the Miamis on the portage from the St. Joseph to the Kankakee. He went there, and was displeased to find three Iroquois in the village who had been urging the Miamis to continue the war against the Illinois. The Iroquois had the hardihood to present themselves to La Salle. He spoke so sharply to them that they were frightened and left secretly that night without even waiting to collect furs that belonged to them. This effect of La Salle's mere presence and words upon the haughty Iroquois so impressed the Miamis that they were ready to listen to anything he had to say.

On the day after his arrival, La Salle assembled the Miamis and the seven or eight different tribes of Indians who had fled here from New England after the outbreak known as King Philip's War. Our ancestors regarded them with hatred and contempt, but the French were wiser and kinder in their treatment of the poor savages, the real

owners of the country, and La Salle well knew how to make them his friends. On this occasion he delivered a speech which established a record for successful oratory after the Indian manner. In strange contrast, indeed, to his shyness and reserve with white men, was the genius of eloquence he could call to aid when treating with these children of the forest.[1]

It has been explained before that the Indians considered all speeches only "as written in air," unless they were accompanied by presents. La Salle, knowing this, had with him a great number of presents, which he used to clinch the different points in his discourse.

He began by giving them a roll of tobacco, to clear their understanding, since they were to treat of important affairs. Then he gave them three

[1] "Public speaking played a large part in Indian life. . . . There was a class of professional speakers, who had trained themselves by carefully listening to the ablest debaters among their people, and had stored their memories with a large number of stock phrases and images taken from nature. . . . Among a people who devoted so much time to public discussion, a forcible speaker wielded great influence. One of the sources of the power of La Salle over the natives . . . lay in the fact that he had thoroughly mastered their method of oratory and could harangue an audience in their own tongue like one of their best speakers." — William Henry Johnson, "French Pathfinders in North America," page 33.

From a photograph by John Finley.

OLD FRENCH MILL AT LACHINE

pieces of blue stuff, to cover, he said, the bodies of their dead who had been killed by the Iroquois, and to encourage them to raise their eyes to the blue sky, "which peace would render serene, and the sun clearer than usual."

The third present was a piece of red cloth, to cover the blood of their relatives spilt on the ground and to signify that in future all would be feasting and joy, since red was the color of festivity.

The Indians, who understood perfectly that these gifts were really intended for the living, grunted in approval of the manner of presentation and the honor done by it to their dead.

La Salle went on to give them cloaks for their dead, axes to build them a tomb, bead necklaces and other ornaments to wear during feasts for the dead, and sword-blades for palisades to protect the burial-ground.

With the eighth present, a piece of red cloth, he made an abrupt change in his manner of speaking. "We have, my brothers," he declared, "rendered our duty to the dead. . . . They now ask of us nothing else but that we leave them in peace, that we dry our tears and think only of preserving their nephews who take their places here. . . . But I," he said impressively, "I intend to do more. I intend to restore them to life. You are mourn-

ing perpetually for Oubicolcala, the greatest of your chiefs. Do not believe that he is dead. I have his mind and soul in my body. I will make his name live again. I am another Oubicolcala. . . . In order that every one may know it, I call myself no longer 'Okinas' [the name the Indians gave him], I call myself Oubicolcala! He is not dead, he lives still, and his family shall lack nothing, since his soul is in the body of a Frenchman who can give his relatives everything they need."

The Miamis were first taken by surprise, then completely captivated by this bold metaphor of La Salle's, which was startlingly original, and at the same time perfectly in accord with their ways of speaking and thinking. They interrupted his speech at this point with "great marks of joy and extraordinary applaudings."

The next presents were kettles, capots, or cloaks with hoods worn by both French and Indians, shirts, blankets, knives, axes, etc., given in the name of Oubicolcala to his relatives, to show that as long as they were governed by his advice they would lack nothing.

La Salle next gave them gifts in the name of the king of France, the "very great captain," and urged the main point of his discourse, the establishment of a confederacy, by saying that the king

wished them to live at peace with all their neighbors, especially the Illinois.

He then introduced, with another present, the New England savages, who up to that time had not figured in his discourse, telling the Miamis that they had "the bodies of New England savages, but the minds and hearts of Miamis," and adjured them to receive the newcomers as brothers.

The Miamis, in the best possible humor by this time, agreed to do so, and the New England Indians also gave presents to recommend themselves, which ended the ceremonies for that day.

The next day the Miamis brought presents to La Salle's cabin, danced, and thanked the Heavens, the Sun, and the king of France for having sent them La Salle in place of their dead relatives.

"We have never seen, my brother, Oubicolcala, the dead resuscitated. It must be that he who has brought them back to life must be a great spirit. . . . We make you the master of our beavers and our lands, of our minds and our bodies. We cannot wonder that our brothers from the East wish to live with you. We should have wished so too, if we had known what a blessing it is to be the children of the Great King."

The day was finished with dances and feasts, and La Salle had, without doubt, established him-

self firmly in the affections of these Indians and laid the foundation of a promising confederacy.

In the spring he went to the settlement at Mackinac, where he found Tonty and Father Membré awaiting him. This must have been a meeting full of joy too deep for words. Each had escaped perils and hardships innumerable; but La Salle, in addition to the dangers of the wilds, had been obliged to bear heavy disasters due to the intrigues and treachery of so-called civilized Canada. Man and nature seemed in league against him; but rage as they might, they could not shake the purpose that was more to him than life itself. They could not even make him complain, for, as Membré relates, he told them all his hardships without "the least alteration, always maintaining his ordinary coolness and self-possession. . . . By a firmness of mind and an almost unequaled constancy, I saw him more resolute than ever to continue his work."

CHAPTER XIII

The Adventures of Father Hennepin

While La Salle was wading through the soaked marshes and forests on the way back to Fort Frontenac, and Tonty was filling the unenviable position of go-between for the Iroquois and Illinois, Hennepin and his companions were having troubles of their own with the most ferocious of western Indians, the renowned Sioux.[1]

[1] The powerful Dakota family, also called Sioux, ranged over territory extending from Lake Michigan to the Rocky Mountains and covering the most of the valley of the Missouri. Owing to their renown as warriors, they were sometimes called "the Iroquois of the West." They were driven out to the western plains by the Ojibwas, aided by the French, and became an equestrian nation of buffalo hunters in the Black Hill and Platte region. In 1857 they became dissatisfied with the United States government's treatment of them, and began massacring the settlers on the Minnesota and Iowa border. In the "Terrible Minnesota Massacre" of 1862 nearly one thousand settlers lost their lives. Peace was made a few years later, but when the gold miners began to go into the Black Hills, the Sioux resented it, and war broke out again in 1876–1877. The principal event of this was the massacre of General Custer's entire command of nearly 300 regular troops by the Indians under the leadership of Sitting Bull. The final

Accau, Du Gay, Hennepin, and a "little dog," as Hennepin notes, whom they relied upon to awaken them at night in case of Indians prowling near, reached the junction of the Illinois with the Mississippi without mishap, and having, as Hennepin in his first book expressly states, decided not to go down the Mississippi, turned about and began to explore the Upper River. The spring sun had melted away the snow, and game of all sorts, buffalo, deer, beaver, and bear, filled the forests. The party had plenty to eat, and would have had little to worry about if they had not known that they were approaching the country of the dreaded Sioux. As it was, Hennepin constantly added the petition to their daily prayers that they might meet these warriors in the daytime instead of by night.

On the 12th of April, this prayer seemed to be answered. Accau and Du Gay were cooking a turkey on the shore, Hennepin had the canoe drawn up and was daubing pitch on the seams, when they suddenly perceived a war-party of about thirty-three canoes containing one hundred

outbreak of the Sioux was in the winter of 1890–91, when Sitting Bull was killed and their resistance broken. There are about 24,000 Sioux still living in the United States and Canada, and their ceremonies of the annual sun-dance, voluntary self-torture, etc., are still kept up.

and twenty savages, swiftly sweeping down the river. They were the Sioux, seeking to surprise their enemies, the Miamis. As soon as they saw the Frenchmen, they uttered frightful cries and bore down on them full speed, discharging a shower of arrows, while many of the younger warriors leaped from the canoes, either into the water or on land, in their haste to surround the unfortunate Frenchmen. The older men, however, seeing that the strangers carried the peace calumet, ordered the young men not to kill them; but they wrenched the calumet from their hands. The French then offered the savages some French tobacco, and signified to them, by drawing with a little stick upon the sand, that their enemies, the Miamis, had crossed the Mississippi to join the Illinois. Upon this, three or four old men set up a most doleful wailing, laying their hands upon Hennepin's head, while he did his best to console them by wiping their tears with a "wretched handkerchief" he possessed. However appreciative they may have been of his sympathy, they still refused to smoke the peace pipe, and insisted upon the Frenchmen's embarking with them, putting them in front of the fleet in their canoe, and urging them on with piercing yells which froze the blood in their veins with terror.

Finally they landed to camp for the night, when they held a council to decide what they should do with the captives. After some debating, one of the chiefs approached the Frenchmen, as they sat forlornly at a little distance, and said that the majority of warriors were in favor of tomahawking them. Upon learning this, Hennepin threw into the midst of the council a present of tobacco, knives, and axes, and meekly bowing his head, offered his neck for the tomahawk. The Indians were appeased, and several of the more kindly disposed ones brought them beaver to eat in a bark dish.

The next morning a chief, with face and body smeared with paint, came to them and smoked their peace pipe and passed it round among the other warriors. He gave them to understand, however, that they must accompany them as prisoners.

Hennepin found the life exceedingly strenuous. The Indians paddled all day and danced all night. "Notwithstanding the force of their yelling," he says, "the fatigue of the day, the watching by night, the old men almost all awoke at daybreak for fear of being surprised by their enemies. As soon as dawn appeared one of them gave the cry, and in an instant all the warriors entered their

bark canoes, some passing around the islands in the river to kill some beasts, while the most alert went by land, to discover whether any enemy's fire was to be seen."

Hennepin had a hard time at first with his devotions, since the Indians, seeing him muttering, thought he was pronouncing a charm to hurt them. Accau requested him to omit the prayers and Du Gay begged him to conceal himself. "I followed the latter's advice," he says, "but the more I concealed myself, the more I had the Indians at my heels, for when I entered the wood, they thought I was going to hide some goods underground, so that I knew not on which side to turn to pray, for they never let me out of their sight." Finally, after begging his two canoe-men's pardon for putting their lives in danger, he conceived the plan of chanting his prayers in his canoe with his book open. The Indians adored singing; and since they thought that the breviary was a spirit which taught him to sing for their amusement, they allowed him to indulge in this exercise as much as he liked!

An old warrior named Aquipaguetin, whose son had been killed by the Miamis, one day gave a bear feast. The warriors attended in full war-paint, their hair well greased with bear oil and besprinkled with red and white feathers or the

down of birds. "All danced with their arms akimbo," says Hennepin, "and struck the ground with their feet so stoutly as to leave the imprint visible." After one of Aquipaguetin's surviving sons had passed around the war pipe, Aquipaguetin himself addressed them, "in a doleful voice, broken with sighs and sobs, with his whole body bathed in tears," interrupting his discourse every now and then to go over and put his hands on the heads of Hennepin and the other Frenchmen, who were extremely uneasy at this mark of attention, fearing that the old savage intended to kill them as compensation for the loss of his son.

Aquipaguetin indeed had this in mind, but was opposed by a majority of the other chiefs, who wished to have the French come and trade in their country, and thought that killing the first ambassadors would be a poor way of beginning negotiations. They did not prevent Aquipaguetin, however, from thinking up pretexts to deprive the French of their goods without paying for them.

"This wily savage," says Hennepin, "had the bones of some important deceased relative, which he preserved with great care in some skins dressed and adorned with several rows of black and red porcupine quills; from time to time he assembled his men to give it a smoke, and he made us come

several days in succession to cover the deceased's bones with goods, and by a present wipe away the tears. . . . To appease this captious man, we threw on the bones of the deceased several fathoms of French tobacco, axes, knives, beads, and some black and white wampum bracelets," which the old chief proceeded to divide among various warriors.

The French continued to be anxious about their fate, as nearly every night some of the old men wept over them, "often rubbing our arms and whole bodies with their hands," says Hennepin, "which they then put on our heads. Besides being hindered from sleeping by these tears, I often did not know what to think, nor whether these Indians wept because some of their warriors would have killed us, or whether they wept out of pure compassion at the ill treatment shown us."

Meanwhile Aquipaguetin every few days would have an access of bad temper over the loss of his son, which could only be soothed by a present of more knives and tobacco from the captives. Under these circumstances they were glad when a friendly chief told them that they would reach the end of their journey in six days. "Pulling up three little piles of grass," says Hennepin, "for us to sit upon, he took a piece of cedar full of little round holes,

in one of which he put a stick, which he spun round between the two palms of his hands, and in this way made fire to light the tobacco in his great calumet."

After nineteen days' journey they reached a place on the river near the site of St. Paul, where the Indians separated to go to their various villages. The Frenchmen were given to the heads of three families, to take the place of children killed in war. They were forced to continue the journey overland to the Indians' village, which lay to the north near the lake now called Mille Lacs, and during the course of it were obliged to ford or swim many rivers and creeks, which, though it was nearly May, were filmed over with thin ice, which cut their legs badly. Hennepin swam with the savages; but as the other Frenchmen could not swim, they were carried across on the Indians' shoulders. The latter, being all tall, strong men, traveled at great speed; and as the Europeans lagged behind, they took delight in making them hurry by setting fire to the grass of the plains behind them, so that they had to run or be burnt.

After five days' march by land the Indians called a halt and began to divide the Frenchmen's goods among them. Soon a number of squaws and pappooses were seen coming to meet them,

and presently the bark huts of a Sioux village came in view. As Hennepin entered, his heart sank into his sandals, for he saw that bundles of straw were hanging to the posts in front of the cabins, "to which these savages bind those whom they take as slaves, and burn them." He was still more alarmed when he perceived that the Sioux were making the Frenchman, Du Gay, enter, singing and rattling a gourd filled with pebbles, and that they had painted his head and face in various colors and tied a tuft of white feathers to his hair — attentions which they usually paid to captives whom they were about to put to death by torture.

Nevertheless, their reception was better than he had feared. They were almost fainting, as they had only eaten a small piece of meat once a day for five days; seeing which, one of the chiefs brought them a mess of rice, seasoned with whortleberries, in large bark dishes. He also gave them the peace calumet to smoke.

Immediately after, the three Frenchmen were separated, each being given to a different chief. Hennepin was dismayed to find himself fall to the lot of his old enemy, Aquipaguetin. The latter, however, experienced a change of heart and became fairly amiable to him. He commanded him to follow him to his village, which was on an island in

the middle of a lake. His five wives met them on the shore and paddled them across in canoes.

On their arrival, an old Indian again wept over Hennepin, who was so exhausted that he had to be supported by two men. To relieve him, the Indians rubbed him with wild-cat oil, which was supposed to be very good for muscular stiffness, on account of the strength and suppleness of the animal which furnished it. A bark platter of fish was given him to eat, and after the meal Aquipaguetin told his wives to regard Hennepin as their son, and himself presented him with a robe of ten large dressed beaver skins, trimmed with porcupine quills. Later on, to relieve his weakness, he was treated to a sweating bath, made by placing a pile of heated stones in a small hut, the openings of which were tightly covered with buffalo skins — a remedy from which Hennepin thought he received great benefit.

During his stay in this village, Hennepin made himself useful by shaving neatly the heads of the children, as was the custom of the tribe, the members of which usually performed this operation with red-hot stones, and dosing and bleeding sufferers from various diseases. On account of these services, and also on account of his pocket compass and a little metal pot he had, with feet molded

after the face of a lion, which they regarded as charms, the Indians held him in considerable respect. He complained, however, that when, as frequently happened, there was not enough food to go around, the squaws neglected him for the sake of their children.

Early in the summer the Indians started off on a buffalo hunt. Hennepin was expected to go with his foster father, but, being anxious to escape this honor, said that he had promised to meet some "spirits," or Frenchmen, at the mouth of the Wisconsin, and that they would bring goods for the Indians. Whether this statement was true or not, it served its purpose, and he was allowed to separate from them, together with Du Gay, who was friendly to the priest, while Accau, who hated the sight of him, preferred to stay with the Indians.

The two travelers paddled down the river, catching turtles and catfish, and once shooting a buffalo, the meat of which soon spoiled, as they did not know how to dress it. They had passed the Falls of St. Anthony (between the sites of Minneapolis and St. Paul) and the river now "flowed calmly on its way amid strange and unique beauties; a wilderness, clothed with velvet grass; forest-shadowed valleys; lofty heights, whose smooth slopes seemed

leveled with the scythe; domes and pinnacles, ramparts and ruined towers, the work of no human hand."

Hennepin's pleasure in this peaceful journey, however, was suddenly spoiled when he saw his adopted father Aquipaguetin, whom he had supposed to be hunting buffalo five hundred leagues away, swiftly descending upon him with a band of warriors in canoes. Aquipaguetin's keen business instincts, it appears, had inspired him with the idea of meeting the traders at the mouth of the Wisconsin himself, in order to get their goods. To Hennepin's relief, he did not make a captive of him again, but went on down the river. In a few days he returned, very angry because the traders (who were probably an invention of Hennepin's imagination) had failed to materialize. Hennepin thought his last hour had come, but the old chief did no more than give him a severe scolding and continued his course up the river.

Some time after Hennepin and Du Gay, finding themselves unable to get enough food, joined a party of Sioux for the sake of the hunting. Early in the fall, the tribe encountered five armed Frenchmen, of whom the leader was Daniel Greysolon Du Lhut, a cousin of Tonty's and a noted *coureur de bois*, who was employed by the government in

important missions to the savages in the western Great Lake region.

His influence with the Sioux was sufficient to make them treat Hennepin with greater respect than before. In fact, though Hennepin himself does not acknowledge it, Du Lhut rescued him from a most humiliating slavery. Soon afterwards, the whole party of Frenchmen, including Accau, left the Sioux, and after visiting the Jesuit mission at Green Bay, spent the winter at the Jesuit station at Mackinac. In the spring Hennepin began his journey home, and in time arrived, very sunburnt, worn, and tattered, at his old station at Fort Frontenac, where his brother priest, Luc Buisset, welcomed him as one risen from the dead, since a rumor had reached him that Hennepin had been hanged by the Indians with his own cord of St. Francis.

It would be well if we could leave Hennepin here, enjoying a well-earned rest after the hardships of his missionary journey, but truth compels us to state that in after years, at least, he was not as guileless as he seemed when he was paddling his little canoe on the western rivers. He was the historian of La Salle's party, and his first account of their journey, published in Europe in 1683, had a great success. He was, in fact, the first popular writer

on New France. If he had contented himself with this, his reputation would be comparatively unblemished, for he had many good qualities, and this first account is truthful in the main, except where he makes himself out the moving spirit and main person in the enterprise, when he was really a rather unimportant passenger.

Fourteen years, however, after this expedition, and seven years after La Salle's death, he published a second edition in which he inserted the claim that, after leaving La Salle at Fort Crèvecœur, he and the two other men descended the Mississippi to its mouth before being captured by the Sioux, a feat which would be absolutely impossible according to the dates given in his first book. In order to make his story sound plausible, he cribbed and added whole chapters from the book of Father Membré, whose book describing his trip down the Mississippi with La Salle the following year was published before Hennepin's. Besides trying to take from La Salle the credit of his discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi, Hennepin, although during La Salle's lifetime he pretended to be on the best of terms with him, also included in this second edition many cruel slanders on his character. Hennepin's childlike and amusing vanity became, in time, a cruel weapon used against the intrepid La Salle.

CHAPTER XIV

Success at Last!

Now the great trip was all to be done over again. But first La Salle had to go back to Canada and raise fresh funds — not an easy matter, seeing that he was already burdened with the cost of the first two expeditions, which had brought him in nothing, and was also still in debt for the building and maintenance of Fort Frontenac. He and Father Membré embarked in their canoes, leaving Tonty at Mackinac, and paddled the thousand miles to Fort Frontenac with apparently no more fuss about it than a party would make to-day in traveling the same distance by automobile. From there La Salle went down the river to Montreal, and with the help of Frontenac succeeded in putting off his creditors, and even borrowing more money from them.

A memoir of La Salle's, explaining the profitableness of trade with the Indians, may be quoted to account for the hopefulness of his creditors. In it he proves that a shirt worth thirty sous in France will sell for one hundred sous, that is, their equivalent in furs;

with the Indians, an ell of serge, worth two livres, would sell for six francs, and so on. It followed that after paying all the expenses of carrying, wages, etc., the trade would yield on an average a profit of three hundred per cent. "His Canadian supporters were all practical traders — they knew that he was within the facts in this statement . . . and endorsed it when he sent it to France."

By autumn he had his men gathered, and was once more on the road to the West. This time they went by Lake Simcoe, passing the site of Toronto. "It was October," says Parkman, "before he reached Lake Huron. Day after day and week after week the heavy-laden canoes crept on along the lonely wilderness shores, by the monotonous ranks of bristling moss-bearded firs; lake and forest, forest and lake; a dreary scene haunted with yet more dreary memories, — disasters, sorrows and deferred hopes; time, strength and wealth spent in vain; a ruinous past and a doubtful future; slander, obloquy and hate. With unmoved heart the patient voyager held his course, and drew up his canoes at last on the beach at Fort Miami."

A number of the New England Indians awaited him there, and a few days before Christmas the party started on their way. There were fifty-four in all; twenty-three Frenchmen and eighteen

warriors, as well as ten squaws and three pappooses whom the braves insisted upon taking with them.

For almost the first time in La Salle's fate-driven career, circumstances were favorable. The fields glittered with a hard crust of snow, making travel on snowshoes easy. They went by way of the Chicago River, along the route of the present Drainage Canal. Near the site of the present great city, they had stopped to make sledges on which to drag their baggage across the portage from the Chicago to the Des Plaines River, along whose banks Tonty and Membré had nearly starved in the previous winter.

Still dragging their sledges, they followed the frozen bed of this stream and the Illinois River, into which it flows, till they came to the site of the Illinois village, seen last under such horrible conditions. It was deserted, as usual in winter, though a good many of the Illinois had returned to it after the sacking. The voyagers passed on to Lake Peoria, where the water was open and they could continue in canoes. La Salle had by this time given up the idea of building a ship to descend the Mississippi, on account of the difficulty of such an undertaking and the reports he had had of the peacefulness of the river.

Again they passed the places of the opposing

camps of the Illinois and Iroquois, and again La Salle reached the junction of the Illinois with the Mississippi, which he had last seen when his mind was filled with anxiety for his lost friend Tonty.

But now Tonty was with him, and all was prosperous. They emerged upon the Mississippi on February 6, and intrusted their canoes to the current of the great, dark, mysterious stream. They passed the place where the Missouri, "descending from its mad career through a vast unknown of barbarism," furiously whirled its muddy torrent into that of the Mississippi. "It pours in so much mud," wrote Father Membré, "that from its mouth the water of the Great River, whose bed is also slimy, is more like clear mud than river water, without changing at all till it reaches the sea." [1]

As if to make up for the quality of the water (which, it must be admitted, the French cared but little for as a drink at the best), they began to find plenty of fish and game. Soon after entering the

[1] The turbulent character of the water of the Missouri is as noticeable to-day as it was two hundred years ago. Mark Twain says that if you will let a glass of Missouri River water stand half an hour, "you can separate the land from the water as easy as Genesis; and then you will find them both good: the one good to eat, the other good to drink." But the natives, he says, do not take them separately, but together, as nature mixed them!

Mississippi they caught a catfish large enough to afford a plentiful supper for twenty-two men.[1] They also gathered quantities of wild beans whose stalks, "as big as your arm," wound around the trees like ivy in the France they had left behind them.

They stopped every day to fish and hunt. One day, near the site of the Third Chickasaw Bluff, a man named Pierre Prud'homme, who had never hunted before, went off in the woods to make his first attempt. "This time I am going to make them talk about me," he said naïvely. In fact, he succeeded in this even better than he expected — not, however, by bringing back game, but by neglecting to bring back either game or himself. Night came, and all the hunters returned but Prud'homme. The others feared that he had been killed, as they had seen the tracks of Indians in the woods. La Salle had a rough fort built, in case they should be attacked, and for several days the party searched for the lost hunter without success.

In the meantime they captured two Indians of the nation of the Chickasaws, who promised to guide La Salle to their village. They gave him to

[1] "I have seen a Mississippi catfish that was more than six feet long, and weighed two hundred and fifty pounds." — Mark Twain, "Life on the Mississippi," page 9.

understand that it was only two days off, but after La Salle and some of his men had followed them for two days, they confessed that it was really five days distant. La Salle, naturally much annoyed, had to turn back; but he gave one of the savages a present to take to his chief, with the invitation to all the tribe to meet him on the river. He kept the other Chickasaw for a hostage.

They broke camp and went on down the river, still looking along the banks for Prud'homme. In a few days the Indians managed to get on his trail and followed it up till they found him, alive and unhurt, but very hungry. He confessed that he had been for ten days without food, and very much frightened of the Indians. Probably he had enough of hunting for quite a while!

It was now March, and the warm sun, the hazy air, and fresh green on the trees welcomed the travelers to a country pleasanter and more fertile than their rugged, ice-bound Canada. But danger lurked beyond the bends of the unknown river. As they were drifting down early one morning in a thick fog, they heard the muffled beating of an Indian drum and war-cries of savages. They were evidently near a village. La Salle landed his men and had them throw up a rough intrenchment of felled trees on the river bank.

While this was being done the adventurous Tonty went prospecting, and, the fog having cleared, he discovered the village on the other side of the river, which was very wide at this point. The Indians got in their canoes to cross. When they were near enough to hear him, La Salle called across in the Illinois language, asking what tribe they were. They replied, "Akansa," or Arkansas. They fired an arrow to see whether the French were bent on peace or war. As their fire was not returned, they were reassured, and came nearer.

La Salle held up the calumet, a sign of peace almost invariably respected by these southern tribes. The Indians landed and smoked it. One of the Frenchmen returned with them to their village, and six of their chiefs came to visit La Salle. Afterwards all the French visited the village, which was on the site of the future town of Napoleon, Arkansas.

"The whole village," Father Membré wrote in his journal, "came down to the shore to meet us, except the women, who had run off. I cannot tell you the civility and kindness we received from these barbarians, who brought us poles to make huts, supplied us with firewood during the three days we were among them, and took turns in feasting us. But, my Reverend Father, this gives no

idea of the good qualities of these savages, who are gay, civil, and free-hearted. The young men, though the most alert and spirited we had seen, are nevertheless so modest that not one of them would take the liberty to enter our hut, but all stood quietly at the door. They are so well formed that we were lost in admiration at their beauty. We did not lose the value of a pin while we were among them."

The Akansas greatly admired a ceremony the French went through, which they might not have done if they had understood it better. This was the taking possession of their country in the name of the French king. La Salle planted in the ground a wooden cross, with the king's arms nailed on it, and Membré, in his priest's robes, sang a hymn, after which the whole company shouted "Vive le roi!" The Indians, said Father Membré, raised their eyes to heaven at the sight of the cross and knelt as if to pray. They thought it a "medicine" of great value, and were observed to rub their hands over their bodies after rubbing them over the cross, in the hope of getting some kind of virtue from it.

After leaving this hospitable village, the French ate the meat of their first alligator, which was killed by one of their Indian hunters. After journeying

LEADEN PLATE BURIED BY THE FRENCH

The wooden columns planted by La Salle to establish the claims of the French in time disappeared. Later, leaden plates were buried near some well-defined landmark in the country thus claimed by the explorers. The plate here shown (in size about four by eight inches) was buried in 1749 near Warren, Pennsylvania, and unearthed long after. This interesting relic, described in Parkman's "Montcalm and Wolfe," may be seen in the rooms of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

for three hundred more miles, passing "the sites, since become historic, of Vicksburg and Grand Gulf," they came to another village, in what is now Tensas County, Louisiana, which belonged to the Taensas Indians. They camped a few leagues from it, and Tonty, with Prud'homme and another Frenchman and two Indians, went to reconnoiter. Tonty says it was during the night; perhaps he means the early evening, but surely this was not a propitious time to visit a tribe of strange savages. They were indulging in the customary Indian amusement of singing, and the Indian with Tonty recognized the songs as those of a friendly nation, so "they entered in safety to their village."

They were led to the cabin of the chief. Its size and appearance surprised Tonty, and he was still more amazed when he entered it. He saw a room forty feet deep, with walls of sun-baked mud two feet thick, and a dome-shaped roof made of rushes and ornamented with rude paintings. It was lighted in the middle by the flaring light of a torch of dry canes, reflected from great shields of yellow copper on the walls. At one end of the room sat the chief on a couch, while opposite him were more than sixty elders, wrapped in white garments woven from bark. These "had all their hands on their heads and howled all with one voice like wolves,

'Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!'" After the chief had spoken to Tonty, they all sat down and the visitors were offered seats on a fine cane mat, "very delicately worked," spread on the ground.

The interpreter of the French stood up and harangued the chief, interrupting his address to take off a buffalo-robe he had on and present it to his listener. The latter took it and courteously reclothed the speaker with his own garment. The gist of the interpreter's speech was the friendliness of the French and the need they had for provisions. The chief immediately commanded one of his followers to tell the women to make meal of Indian corn and paste of fruit; it was very good, Tonty says. Tonty gave the chief a knife, with which the latter was immensely pleased, considering it of great value. He feasted them with all that he had.

Tonty noticed that when one of the chief's little children started to pass between him and the torch, its mother pulled it back sharply, such an action evidently being contrary to the rigid etiquette of this cabin court. The chief had slaves to serve him, and in contrast to the usual Indian custom of all dipping their fingers in the same dish, no one ate out of his dishes but himself. These dishes were earthen bowls, varnished. They had knives and

axes of iron. Tonty admired sixteen fine pearls hanging from the chief's ears, and was told that they came from the Gulf.

The visitors were taken to the temple, which was opposite the chief's cabin. It was a building of sun-baked mud, similar to the chief's, and guarded by a thick mud wall, where sentries were posted day and night. The wall was ornamented with the heads of enemies killed in war. These Indians were sun-worshipers, and kept a perpetual sacred fire, an emblem of the sun, burning in their temple, watched over by two old men. They regarded their chief as a demi-god, and sacrificed one hundred victims at his death.

On or about the 26th of March they approached the village of the Natchez Indians, a tribe kindred to the Taensans, near the site of the present city of Natchez, but these savages showed unmistakable signs of a warlike spirit by swarming on the bank, bows and arrows in hand. Tonty volunteered to cross the river with the calumet and treat with them. La Salle disliked sending him on an errand of such danger, but it was necessary to win them over, and Tonty was the best one of his company, except himself, for such negotiations.

The brave Italian got in a canoe and paddled across. His courage and the showing of the calumet

had its effect. As soon as his boat touched the shore, the Indians sat down on the bank and consented to smoke the peace-pipe. Tonty gave a knife to an old man who he thought was the chief, and was amused to see him at once secret it in his robe, as if he had stolen it. Tonty laid his iron hook over his other hand to signify friendship, and asked them by signs to send two hostages over to the other shore while he stayed there. They did as he asked, and soon returned with La Salle and the others of the party. La Salle with Membré and half the men visited their village, about three leagues distant, where they spent the night.

"The Sieur de la Salle," Membré wrote, "whose very air, engaging manners, tact, and address attract love and respect alike, produced such an effect on the hearts of these people that they did not know how to treat us well enough."

During the night the Natchez sent for the chief of the Coroas, who immediately set out post haste with some of his followers to see the remarkable strangers and if possible to get some presents. The next day the Coroas embarked in the canoes with the French and escorted them, in the midst of a steady downpour of rain, to their village, where they were entertained with the usual feasts and dances, and where they made the expected gifts.

The Coroas told them it was ten days' more journey from there to the sea. They left there on Easter Sunday, after celebrating mass, in the midst of the curious Indians.

Near the mouth of the Red River, they passed a village of hostile savages, who prepared to give battle with beatings of drums and war-cries, and who greeted the French ambassadors with showers of arrows.

They were nearing their destination. On the 6th of April they found themselves at the beginning of the estuary where the Mississippi divided into three channels. La Salle took the right, Tonty the middle, and D'Autray the left. Each channel held a wide, deep river. The men eagerly scooped up the water and tasted it. At first it was only brackish, but as they went on it changed to brine, and the wind which blew in their faces had a "tang" not found in the soft inland breezes. Suddenly there burst upon them a great panorama of tossing waves and limitless horizon. It was their long sought goal, the Gulf of Mexico!

On the 9th of April, 1682, La Salle and all the company gathered on a small hillock not far from the mouth of the river. A column bearing the arms of France had been made ready, and a leaden plate engraven. "While the New England Indians and

their squaws looked on in wondering silence," the Europeans chanted three Latin hymns used in the service of the church. Then three volleys of musketry were fired, there were shouts of "Vive le Roi," and La Salle, planting the column in the ground, took possession of the country in these words: —

"In the name of the most high, mighty, invincible, and victorious Prince, Louis the Great, by the grace of God King of France and of Navarre, Fourteenth of that name, I, this ninth day of April, one thousand six hundred and eighty-two, in virtue of the commission of his Majesty, which I hold in my hand, and which may be seen by all whom it may concern, have taken, and do now take, in the name of his Majesty and of his successors to the crown, possession of this country of Louisiana . . . from the mouth of the great river St. Louis, otherwise called the Ohio . . . as also along the river Colbert, or Mississippi, and the rivers which discharge themselves thereinto, from its source beyond the country of the Nadouessioux . . . as far as its mouth at the sea, or Gulf of Mexico, and also to the mouth of the River of Palms [the Rio Grande] . . ."

At last the patient explorer had triumphed! He had won his way through every imaginable obstacle, from his former seigniory by the rapids of the St.

Lawrence; and the whole great valley, from the Alleghanies to the Rockies, from "the swamps of the nests of the eagles" in Wisconsin to the sultry, "tide-swept marshes" of the Gulf — "a region of savannas and forests, sun-cracked deserts and grassy prairies, watered by a thousand rivers, ranged by a thousand war-like tribes" — belonged to France![1]

[1] "The Mississippi is remarkable in still another way — in its disposition to make prodigious jumps by cutting through narrow necks of land, and thus straightening and shortening itself. More than once it has shortened itself thirty miles at a single jump! . . . The Mississippi does not alter its locality by cut-offs alone; it is always changing its habitat *bodily* — is always moving bodily *sidewise*. At Hard Times, La., the river is two miles west of the region it used to occupy. . . . *Nearly the whole of that one thousand three hundred miles of old Mississippi River which La Salle floated down in his canoes, two hundred years ago, is good solid dry ground now. The river lies to the right of it, in places, and to the left of it in other places.*" — Mark Twain, "Life on the Mississippi," page 3.

CHAPTER XV

Greater Plans for the Future

Having traced the great Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, La Salle and his party turned about and began the long journey upstream, sweltering as they plied their paddles in the heat of the tropic spring. It was much like the trip down, except that they had more trouble from hostile Indians, narrowly escaping a surprise from one treacherous band called the Quinquipissas. They had difficulty in securing provisions, and lived — or half-starved rather — on the few alligators, deer, and bear they managed to kill. At the Taensas village, however, all was friendly. Tonty escorted thither one of the tribe whom they had befriended while he was fleeing from his enemies, the Coroas, and was more than ever impressed by the sagacity of the Taensas chief and the respect paid him. The chief, on this occasion, came to visit La Salle on the river, accompanied by canoes filled with singers uttering weird cries

and rattling their gourds, while the canoe-men paddled in cadence to the savage rhythm.

When the chief landed, two courtiers walked along before and behind him, waving fans of swansdown, and all his subjects formed in two rows on each side and swept a path with their hands. The chief received with delight the gun and other presents La Salle gave him, and promised eternal friendship. When the French put their canoes in the water to continue their journey up-stream, he made a prayer to the sun and threw tobacco into the river to insure them a peaceful voyage.

Some distance below the junction of the Illinois and the Mississippi La Salle fell ill. This was a foe which not even he could fight against. He was obliged to stop at Fort Prud'homme, where Father Membré took care of him, and Tonty went on to Mackinac to send word of the discovery from there to Canada. Not until the middle of the summer could the stricken leader continue his journey. He then proceeded by slow stages, and reached the Straits of Mackinac in September. In a letter to a friend written soon after, he says: —

"Though my discovery is made, and I have descended the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, I cannot send you this year either an account of

my journey or a map. On the way back I was attacked by a deadly disease, which kept me in danger of my life for forty days, and left me so weak that I could think of nothing for four months after. I have hardly strength enough now to write my letters, and the season is so far advanced that I cannot detain a single day this canoe which I send expressly to carry them. If I had not feared being forced to winter on the way, I should have tried to get to Quebec to meet the new governor, if it is true that we are to have one; but in my present condition this would be an act of suicide, on account of the bad nourishment I should have all winter in case the snow and ice stopped me on the way. Besides, my presence is absolutely necessary in the place to which I am going. I pray you, my dear sir, to give me once more all the help you can. I have great enemies, who have succeeded in all they have undertaken. I do not pretend to resist them, but only to justify myself, *so that I can pursue by sea the plans I have begun here by land.*"

The last sentence gives a clew to his new plans — plans developed perhaps in that fever-stricken sojourn at Fort Prud'homme, for there is indeed something fantastic and dreamlike about them. What they were we shall see later. He was anxious

to go at once to France and lay his plans before the king, but ill health prevented, and he spent the next winter with Tonty, on the high rock near the Illinois village where he had previously commanded Tonty to build a fortress. This cliff is still one of the natural curiosities of the region, and bears the name "Starved Rock."

During this winter the two leaders made it a strong place of defense, while, on the plains below, the scattered Illinois returned to the number of six thousand. La Salle, perched in his "castle," like some feudal lord in the Middle Ages, could look down "on a concourse of wild human life. Squaws labored, warriors lounged in the sun, naked children whooped and gamboled on the grass." Other tribes were there, — "Shawnees from the Ohio, Abenakis from Maine, Miamis from the sources of the Kankakee, with others whose barbarous names are hardly worth the record" — all trusting in the protection given them by a few Frenchmen against the dreaded Iroquois. La Salle's plans for a confederacy were thus far succeeding wonderfully well.

The confederacy could not be sustained long, however, without help from Canada; and there, unfortunately, things had changed, and a new governor, La Barre, succeeded the good old Fron-

tenac. La Salle, from his rocky wilderness castle, sent letters asking La Barre's assistance. But it was not granted, for La Barre was jealous of the explorer and his privileges in the fur-trade, and he sought every opportunity to detain the men La Salle sent to Montreal with furs in payment of his debts. He refused to send him either arms or men to maintain the fort, and he wrote to the king in France, throwing discredit on La Salle and saying that he had made a report of a false discovery, and was "keeping in the backwoods, five hundred leagues off, with the idea of attracting the inhabitants to him, and building up an imaginary kingdom for himself, by corrupting all the bankrupts and idlers of this country."

The fickle king was influenced by these reports. He wrote to La Barre, "I am convinced, like you, that the discovery of the Sieur de la Salle is very useless, and that such enterprises ought to be prevented in future, as they tend only to corrupt the inhabitants by the hope of gain, and to diminish the revenue from beaver skins."

Encouraged by the royal sanction, the rascally governor (who was himself making illegal profits out of the fur-trade) sent two of his associates to seize La Salle's fort at Frontenac, live on his stores, and sell his goods for their own profit, and

told the Iroquois at a conference that they were welcome to plunder and kill La Salle.

La Salle was desperate. After his brilliant and successful efforts he again found himself ruined — upholding a fort in the wilderness without men, without supplies, without money, and without reputation. All because an avaricious old man in power at Quebec was afraid that he would take from him some of his precious fur-profits! There was but one thing to do — go to France and gain audience with the king himself and convince him of the value of his plans.

Why was it that La Salle was so beset by enemies and losses? There are several reasons — the difficulty of his undertakings — the dishonesty of most of those in power in Canada at the time — and the man's own strange personality.

Though La Salle's plans always of necessity involved trade — otherwise he could not have gotten the money to finance them — he himself was nothing of a trader. He hated business details, and writes to a friend, "After having put matters in good trim for trade I intend to withdraw, though I think it will be very profitable; for I am disgusted to find that I must always be making excuses, which is a part I cannot play successfully." Again he writes, "I have neither

the habit nor the inclination to keep books, nor have I anybody with me who knows how." He wished his associates to run the business for themselves. "You know that this trade is good; and with a trusty agent to conduct it for you, you run no risk." The same characteristic made his judgment often faulty as to what constituted good business risks and what did not. He disregarded obstacles too completely. The fact is, his mind was on other things than money. What he really desired — what was dearer to him than pleasure or comfort or life itself — is shown by the following words, occurring in another letter to a friend:

"*The life I am leading has no other attraction for me than that of honor; and the more danger and difficulty there is in undertakings of this sort, the more worthy of honor I think they are.*"

There speaks the real La Salle, laying aside for once the reticence that was a part of his nature. For there is no doubt that La Salle was a difficult man for his contemporaries to understand. And for that he himself was partly to blame. Somewhere in his letters occurs the following confession: —

"As for what you say about my look and manner, I myself confess that you are not far from right. But *naturam expellas;* and if I am want-

ing in expansiveness and show of feeling toward those with whom I associate, *it is only through a timidity which is natural to me, and which has made me leave various employments, where without it I could have succeeded.* But as I judged myself ill-fitted for them on account of this defect, I have chosen a life more suited to my solitary disposition; which, nevertheless, does not make me harsh to my people, though joined to a life among savages, it makes me, perhaps, less polished and complaisant than the atmosphere of Paris requires. I well believe that there is self-love in this; and that, knowing how little I am accustomed to a polite life, the fear of making mistakes makes me more reserved than I like to be. So I rarely expose myself to conversation with those in whose company I am afraid of making blunders, and can hardly help making them. Abbé Renaudot knows with what repugnance I had the honor to appear before Monseigneur de Conti; and sometimes it took me a week to make up my mind to go to the audience — that is, when I had time to think about myself, and was not driven by pressing business. It is much the same with letters, which I never write except when pushed to it, and for the same reason. It is a defect of which I shall never rid myself as long as I live, often as it spites me

against myself, and often as I quarrel with myself about it."

Here, as Parkman has pointed out, lay the fatal deficiency in La Salle's power to lead men. Except on rare occasions, he lacked the sympathetic manner, and the power to inspire others with his own enthusiasm, which other more fortunate leaders have possessed. The Indians, perhaps with the intuition children are supposed to have, read him aright and followed him blindly; but white men often failed him when they might have stayed by a more congenial man. Yet it must be admitted that most of the white men with him were as hardened sinners as ever trod the forest trails, and were probably incapable of any unselfish motives whatever.

La Salle spoke the truth when he said that to indulge them meant to tolerate blasphemy, drunkenness, and all sorts of dissipation. "I am a Christian," he explained, "and do not want to bear the burden of their crimes." He goes on to say, "I do not know what you mean by having popular manners. There is nothing special in my food, clothing, or lodging, which are all the same for me as for my men. How can it be that I do not talk with them? M. de Tonty has often found fault with me because I stopped too often to talk

with them. You do not know the men one must employ here, when you exhort me to make merry with them. They are incapable of that; for they are never pleased, unless one gives free rein to their drunkenness and other vices. If that is what you call having popular manners, neither honor nor inclination would let me stoop to gain their favor in a way so disreputable; and, besides, the consequences would be dangerous, and they would have the same contempt for me that they have for all who treat them in this fashion."

And then come the saddest words ever written by him:—

"You write me that even my friends say that I am not a man of popular manners. I do not know what friends they are. I know of none in this country. To all appearance they are enemies, more subtle and secret than the rest. I make no exceptions; for I know that those who seem to give me support do it not out of love for me, but because they are in some sort bound in honor, and that in their hearts they think I have dealt ill with them. . . . I have seen it for a long time; and these secret stabs they give me show it very plainly. After that, it is not surprising that I open my mind to nobody, and trust nobody. I have reasons that I cannot write."

We who know the difficulties and heartbreak of La Salle's career can understand and forgive the morbid sensitiveness which speaks in this letter — for surely it was morbidness which forgot or misjudged Tonty's affectionate loyalty and the unswerving admiration of good Father Membré.

Presently, for the third time, La Salle crossed the sea to seek an audience with the king. His plans, as has been said, had a touch of the fantastic in them, as if they had been dreamed while he lay sick in the rude hut at Fort Prud'homme. Yet they agreed strangely well with the soaring ambitions of Louis XIV, the "Magnificent Monarch." France was at war with Spain. It was very desirable that she should hold a post in the Gulf of Mexico, from which the Spaniards had lately been excluding in a high-handed manner the ships of every country but their own. And it was even considered possible that France should be able to wrest a portion of the Mexican territory from her enemy.

These were La Salle's proposals. The first, that he should return with two hundred men, by way of the Gulf of Mexico and the mouth of the Mississippi, to the countries he had discovered, and, by building new forts and strengthening the old ones all along the way from Lake Ontario to

the Gulf of Mexico, prevent the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the English from gaining an entrance. The second, that he should form on the Mississippi an army of fifteen thousand or more savages, and with them and his Frenchmen march overland to New Biscay, the northern province of Mexico, and conquer it. To accomplish this, he asked from the king only one vessel, a few cannon, and two hundred soldiers. If he did not succeed within three years, provided the war with Spain still continued, he pledged himself to refund to his Majesty all the costs of the enterprise, on pain of forfeiting the government of the posts he should have established.

The king granted all he asked, and even more, as well he might if this grand project was to be executed. The first half of it alone called for considerably more support than La Salle had asked for, while the Mexican invasion necessitated marching across the whole area of what is now Texas, the extent of which he appears to have greatly underestimated, keeping in order, meanwhile, a crowd of savages whom he knew to be fickle and uncontrollable to the last degree. There is some reason to think that he proposed this with a view to impressing the king, and hoped that the ending of the war with Spain would let him out of his

contract. It is possible, also, that his judgment had been seriously impaired by the troubles, hardship, and illness he had undergone. Many of those who came in contact with La Salle at that time thought him out of his mind, and several circumstances, such as his constant change of plans, suspicion of those about him, and extreme irritability, gave a foundation for this belief.

The king, who of course had never been to America, did not see the real difficulties involved, and was caught by the boldness and grandeur of the scheme. Word was sent at once to La Barre in Canada to restore La Salle's property and men to La Salle's lieutenant, La Forest; and La Salle was given four ships, instead of the one he had asked for, and two hundred soldiers. Thirty volunteers, including a marquis, gentlemen and merchants of wealth, two of La Salle's nephews, Moranget and "the little M. Cavelier," several families, a number of girls, and six missionaries, also joined the party. One of the priests was the Abbé Cavelier, La Salle's brother; another was Father Zenobe Membré.

After much vexatious delay, caused by those opposed to the project, the company gathered at Rochelle was ready to sail. Beaujeu, a captain of the royal navy, had been given command at sea,

while La Salle was to order the route they were to take and control the soldiers and the colonists on land. It was an arrangement that led to endless difficulties. La Salle had wished the whole charge, and Beaujeu did not like having a civilian over him. Beaujeu complained that La Salle was unreasonable and suspicious, that he did not tell him his plans, and that he interfered with the sailing of the ship. "He has crowded the decks with boxes and chests of such prodigious size that neither the cannon nor the capstan can be worked," he declared. He accused La Salle of changing his mind constantly.

"It is one thing to-day, another to-morrow. It seems to me that he is not so sure about his undertaking as he was at Paris. This morning he came to see me, and told me he had changed his mind, and intended to give a new turn to the business, and go to another coast. He gave very poor reasons, to which I assented, to avoid a quarrel. . . . I shall go straight forward, without regarding a thousand whims and bagatelles. His continual suspicion would drive anybody mad except a Norman like me; but I shall humor him, as I have always done, even to sailing my ship on dry land, if he likes."

Nerve-racked, tormented by doubts and fears,

by enemies, and, worst of all, by himself, the high-strung leader nevertheless found time to write the following letter to his mother at Rouen:—

MADAME, MY MOST HONORED MOTHER:

At last, after having waited a long time for a favorable wind, and having had a great many difficulties to overcome, we are setting sail with four vessels and nearly four hundred men on board. Everybody is well, including little Colin and my nephew. We all have good hope of a happy success. We are not going by way of Canada, but by the Gulf of Mexico. I passionately wish, and so do we all, that the success of this voyage may contribute to your repose and comfort. Assuredly, I shall spare no effort that it may; and I beg you, on your part, to preserve yourself for the love of us.

You need not be troubled by statements from Canada, which are nothing but the continuation of the artifices of my enemies. I hope to be as successful against them as I have been thus far, and to embrace you a year hence with all the pleasure that the most grateful of children can feel for so good a mother as you have always been. Pray let this hope, which shall not disappoint you, support you through whatever trials may happen, and be sure that you will always find me with a heart full of the feelings which are due to you.

Madame, my Most Honored Mother, from your most humble and most obedient servant and son,

DE LA SALLE.

My brother, my nephews, and all the others greet you and take their leave of you.

It was the last word in all probability that the "good mother" was to have of her younger son. And it may be that the stern man whom all feared, whether they slandered or praised him, still seemed to her the proud and passionate boy who craved affection most when he appeared most indifferent to it. She laid the letter away among her treasured possessions, and it was found about two hundred years later among the papers of the Cavelier family.

CHAPTER XVI

Disaster and Death

La Salle and his big party, in four ships, set sail on the 24th of July, 1684, heading for the West Indies. The ill-assorted company found pleasure in watching the flying fishes, many of which fell on the decks; but when they reached the Tropic of Cancer, the sailors wished to indulge in an amusement not so harmless. This was the time-honored ceremony of ducking the passengers unmercifully in a large tub of water placed on deck. If the passengers objected, they were at liberty to buy off their tormentors with money or treats — so the sailors considered the practice a good thing all around! It was thought that the French way of conducting it was comparatively gentle. The English dipped the unfortunate victims off the yard-arm into the sea! La Salle, however, absolutely forbade the ceremony, and one may imagine how loud were the grumblings of the disappointed tars in consequence. "Assuredly,"

says Joutel, the historian of the party, "they would gladly have killed us all."

Sanitary conditions on board sailing vessels in those days were abominable, and by the time they reached the island of San Domingo, their first stopping-place, La Salle and many of the men were sick. They were landed and lodged in huts. La Salle grew worse. His fever was violent and in his delirium he saw "things equally terrible and strange." His brother and one or two others took care of him in the wretched quarters where he lay. Finally a friendly Capuchin friar offered him his more comfortable house. He was moved there, and was just recovering when he heard of the loss of one of his vessels, which had been captured by Spanish pirates. This caused a relapse, but in time he recovered from that also, and after a conference with the officials of the place as to the best way to proceed, La Salle was ready about the last of November to continue the voyage.

Soon the blue waters of the Gulf lay before them, and somewhere along the low, marshy shore the Great River poured its muddy waters. La Salle had failed to take the degree of longitude at the mouth of the Mississippi when he had been there in 1682, and was therefore uncertain just where to look for it. As they sailed slowly along they were visited

by Indians, who swam out from shore clinging to pieces of timber, boarded their ships, and took with alacrity presents of knives and strings of beads, which they tied around their necks or to their scalp-locks, preparatory to plunging overboard; but they could not give the explorers the information they sought. As a result, the expedition passed the mouth of the river without noticing it, and coasted far beyond, four hundred miles, till finally they landed at Matagorda Bay, on the coast of what is now Texas. It was a fatal mistake.

Here, "among tents and hovels, bales, boxes, casks, spars, dismounted cannon, and pens for fowls and swine, were gathered the dejected men and homesick women who were to seize New Biscay, and hold for France a region large as half Europe."

Disaster followed disaster. One of their ships was wrecked entering the harbor, La Salle thought by the treachery of the pilot. Ammunition, tools, and food were lost on it. Disease broke out, partly on account of the bad food and water, partly because while at San Domingo the men had indulged in every kind of dissipation. Thirty were dead in a short time. These men were indeed the scum of France, many of them having never done anything in their lives but beg at church doors,

but they were somewhat to be pitied, for Joutel, the historian of the party, a man of sense and courage, acknowledges that they had been pressed into the expedition "either by force or surprise." The Indians were proving troublesome neighbors, threatening hostilities and stealing their goods. Worst of all, the little band was hopelessly lost in the midst of the vast prairies.

Beaujeu and La Salle were better friends than when they had started, and the former appears to have done his best to help La Salle out of his difficulties. But at last, being in need of water, wood, and other necessaries for his ship, he was obliged to leave, but offered to return with supplies for La Salle from Martinique. La Salle was so sure that he was near the mouth of the Mississippi, and that the colony could take care of itself, that he recklessly refused the offer.

He was soon to find out his mistake. A series of short trips in the neighborhood revealed no sign of the Mississippi. The situation was indeed desperate, but as usual his courage rose to the occasion. He helped his followers begin a temporary settlement at a spot a short distance away on the river named by him La Vache ("the Cow"), in honor of the buffalo seen on its banks, and still keeping that name in the Spanish form,

Lavaca. Then he began a long and fruitless series of explorations.

It would take too long to tell in detail of these exhausting trips. Their length in miles can be judged from the time they took him. The first extended over a period of five months, from October, 1685, to March, 1686; the second, occupying four months, from April, 1686, to August, 1686. There were interminable prairies traversed, rivers crossed, Indians pacified. Some of his men were lost in the wilderness, killed by Indians, or deserted to them willingly; one was devoured by an alligator, and some were drowned. Many, including La Salle and his nephew Moranget, became dangerously ill. Yet with all this danger and fatigue, not a sign was found of what Joutel now began to call, with truth, "the fatal river."

In the meantime Joutel, who had been left in command of the fort, did his best to cheer the miserable inhabitants of the little settlement, to which La Salle had given his favorite name of Fort St. Louis. The locality, if they had possessed the proper means and the ability to take advantage of it, was not undesirable. They were in the midst of rolling prairies, green in summer and besprinkled with myriad flowers, "like an agreeable enamel," as Joutel says. He was

enthusiastic about the natural aspects of the country. "Nothing is more beautiful to behold than these vast plains when the blossoms appear; a thousand sorts of different colors, whereof many have an agreeable scent, adorn them and afford a most charming object to the eye. . . . I have observed some that smelt like a tuberose. . . . I have seen primroses . . . African gillyflowers, and a sort of purple windflowers. The autumn flowers are almost all of them yellow, so that the plains look all of that color."

More gratifying than flowers to the hungry company was the abundance of game of all kinds, buffaloes, alligators, and smaller animals, wild fowl, fish, and tortoises "whose eggs serve to season our sauces." There were also wild grapes in season and many small wild onions. Salt could be skimmed, like cream, from the pools in the rocks.

With great trouble — for trees grew at some distance — they dragged logs to the settlement to make rude dwellings, whose roofs they covered with buffalo hides. The workmen were incompetent to the last degree, and La Salle, when he was present, was harsh and exacting; often unjust, Joutel says, excusing him, however, by the anxiety he was laboring under, "to see nothing succeed as he had imagined."

Joutel tried to raise the spirits of the company by keeping them busy at various useful tasks during the day, and encouraging them to dance and sing in the evening. Nor was romance altogether absent from the exiles. Joutel and the priests were strict chaperons, but there were occasions, as when the women and girls went out to help the hunters dress the meat of the animals they had killed, when there were opportunities for romance. A Sieur Barbier fell in love with one of the girls and wished to marry her. The maiden and the priests being willing, the wedding took place with due ceremony. The Marquis of Sablonnière was another to fall a victim to Cupid; but Joutel was scandalized at the difference in rank between him and his sweetheart, forbade the match, and would not even allow them to speak to each other.

Joutel describes very interestingly his experiences while hunting the buffalo. "We saw plenty of buffalo. I approached several bands of them, and fired again and again, but could not make one of them fall." He had not yet learned, as Parkman states, that a buffalo rarely falls at once unless hit in the spine. He goes on, "I was not discouraged; and after approaching several more bands, — which was hard work, because I had to crawl on the ground, so as not to be seen, — I

found myself in a herd of five or six thousand, but, to my great vexation, I could not bring one of them down. They all ran off to the right and left. It was near night, and I had killed nothing. Though I was very tired, I tried again, approached another band, and fired a number of shots; but not a buffalo would fall. The skin was off my knees with crawling. At last, as I was going back to rejoin our men, I saw a buffalo lying on the ground. I went toward it, and saw that it was dead. I examined it, and found that the bullet had gone in near the shoulder. Then I found others dead like the first. I beckoned the men to come on, and we set to work to cut up the meat, a task which was new to us all." "It would be impossible," says Parkman, who had hunted big game on the plains, "to write a more true and characteristic sketch of a novice in shooting buffalo on foot."

La Salle returned from his second expedition in August, 1686, with only eight men out of the twenty he had taken with him, with no discovery to report, and with nothing gained but a few horses and some Indian corn and beans bought from the Cenis Indians. The homesick colonists were cheered at first by the sight of their leader, but soon they began to lose heart again. They had

been hoping all this time that those at home in France would send ships to rescue them, but day after day and month after month passed, and not a sail was seen on the horizon. If they had only known the truth, they would have dreaded the sight of a sail as much as hoped for it, for, while their friends forgot them, their enemies, the cruel Spaniards, who had learned of their arrival in the Gulf from the ship they had captured near the West Indies, were scouring the coast with the purpose of wiping out the intruding colony by fire and the sword. The only reason the French escaped was their out-of-the-way location, far beyond the Mississippi.

The last of the four boats they had sailed in had been wrecked near the shore. There was therefore no possible chance of their getting away unless help came from outside. La Salle at once began to plan for another journey, but the heat of the Texas summer was so great that he could not start before autumn.

This plan was indeed a desperate one to fit a desperate need. He resolved not only to try again to find the Mississippi, but, having found it, to make his way back to Canada, over those thousands of miles whose difficulties and dangers none knew better than himself. A number of the party

were to go with him; the remainder, including seven women and girls, were to wait at the fort for help to be sent.

When autumn came, La Salle, whose constitution seemed to have suffered from his many hardships, was again seriously ill; the journey had to be put off for more than a month, till he recovered.

Christmas came, and the homesick, haggard exiles gathered in the rough chapel at midnight and prayed with despairing fervor, while the priests in their white robes hovered about the altar, and the clouds of incense rose as in the great, beautiful cathedrals of France. Twelve more days of waiting passed, and all the company were busy making such preparations as they could out of their poor stores to equip the travelers for their journey. Suits must be made out of the sails of the lost ships, for their clothes, in spite of patching them with deer and buffalo skins, were in many cases completely worn out.

On Twelfth Night, a favorite feast with the French, they gathered again, and with a brave show of cheerfulness went through the time-honored ceremony of raising their cups, filled with cold water, to their lips, while they cried, "The King drinks!"

The next day came the parting. La Salle for

once overcame his reserve, and made the company a short address full of deep feeling; the strange charm that at times lighted up his somber personality showed itself now and won the hearts of his followers anew. They parted with tears and embracings, the premonition strong with many of them that it was for the last time. "Equipped and weaponed for the journey, the adventurers filed from the gate, crossed the river, and held their slow march over the prairies beyond, till intervening woods and hills had shut Fort St. Louis forever from their sight."

Twenty remained at the fort, including Sieur Barbier who was in command and Father Membré who was chaplain; in La Salle's party were seventeen. In the number were La Salle's brother, the Abbé Cavelier, Father Anastase Douay, Joutel, La Salle's two nephews, Moranget, a hot-headed youth, and "the little M. Cavelier," who was now about seventeen; a surgeon, Liotot, Hiens, an ex-pirate, a servant of La Salle's and one of Duhaut's, and La Salle's devoted Indian hunter, Nika, who had followed him ever since the time of his journey with the Sulpitian priests.

Liotot and Duhaut were men of property who had invested heavily in the enterprise and were bitter at its disastrous result. Liotot also had a

grudge against La Salle on account of the loss of his nephew, who had died on one of the previous expeditions, and Duhaut had already shown a bad spirit by intriguing among the men at Fort St. Louis, telling them what he would do for them if La Salle died. Joutel had discovered him in this, and let him off with a rebuke, much to his subsequent regret. At home, these men might have lived as respectable citizens all their days, but the wilderness when it does not make heroes of men has a way of making scoundrels of them, and Duhaut and Liotot were to be the latter.

There was plenty of time for quarreling, for the progress of the party was slow. They had no shoes at first, except what they made out of raw buffalo hide, which had to be kept constantly wet on the feet or they hardened unbearably; innumerable creeks and rivers, swollen by the winter rains, had to be crossed, on a boat made out of bull-hide and carried with them on the backs of their five horses. Often the rains obliged them to lie by for days under shelters of bark and grass.

After two months of this wandering they had only reached the region of the Trinity River. La Salle, disappointed and anxious, had resumed his stern manner; and in the hearts of some of his followers hatred smoldered like fire under the dry

roots of prairie grass, ready at any moment to break out into a sudden blaze.

On the 15th of March, La Salle sent Duhaut, Teissier, a pilot, L'Archevêque, Duhaut's servant, Liotot, the surgeon, Saget, his own servant, and Nika, to a spot about six miles distant from the main party, to look for Indian corn which they had hidden in the ground on a previous trip. The men found the corn rotted, but instead of this food they procured two buffaloes killed by Nika.

It was a custom of the wilds that those who killed game were entitled to the marrow-bones and other choice parts. Liotot and the others had put these by for themselves and were dressing the remainder of the meat, when Moranget, La Salle's nephew, appeared on the scene. He was an impetuous, foolish young man, and had before this involved them in serious trouble with the Indians by his ill-judged actions. On this occasion he flew into a passion, upbraided the men for taking what they had, and confiscated the whole of the meat himself.

This was more than enough to make Duhaut, Liotot, and Hiens turn their evil plottings into action. They took counsel together and resolved to kill Moranget that night. Nika and Saget were also to be dispatched because they were faithful

to La Salle. Teissier, the other man present at the conference, neither aided nor opposed the plot.

The stars came out, one by one, and the conspirators laid down to rest, or pretended rest, while first Moranget, next Saget, and then Nika kept guard. This order had of course been arranged by the plotters, and the others suspected nothing. When Nika's hour was finished, he wakened the man who was to take his place. Soon all three of the victims were in the deep sleep which was to be their last. Then Liotot arose and grasped an axe, while Duhaut and Hiens stood with guns cocked ready to shoot down any one who tried to escape. The surgeon, an adept at bloody work, killed Saget and Nika instantly with blows of his ax, but Moranget's murder took longer. The poor young fellow started up and tried to speak, when the murderers forced La Marle, who was not in the plot, to finish him.

They did not even bury the men they had murdered, but dragged them aside at a little distance, and calmly continued in their camp, determining to kill La Salle here if he should come to look for them, as they rightly guessed he would.

Meanwhile La Salle was becoming anxious over the absence of Moranget. Joutel says: "That evening, while we were talking about what could

have happened to the absent men, he seemed to have a presentiment of what was to take place. He asked me if I had heard of any machinations against them, or if I had noticed any bad design on the part of Duhaut and the rest. I answered that I had heard nothing, except that they sometimes complained of being found fault with so often; and that this was all I knew; besides which, as they were persuaded that I was in his interest, they would not have told me of any bad design they might have. We were very uneasy all the rest of the evening."

The next morning La Salle, Father Anastase Douay, and an Indian guide set out to find the others. "All the way," writes the friar, "he spoke to me of nothing but matters of piety, grace, and predestination; enlarging on the debt he owed to God, who had saved him from so many perils during more than twenty years of travel in America. Suddenly I saw him overwhelmed with a profound sadness, for which he himself could not account. He was so much moved that I scarcely knew him."

They walked on till they came near the river which lay between them and the assassins' camp. La Salle noticed some eagles or buzzards hovering over the grass as if making a meal of carrion and

fired a shot to scare them away. "It was," says Joutel, "the signal for his death."

The conspirators, warned by the shot that La Salle was near, charged their guns, and Duhaut and L'Archevêque crossed the river some distance above without being seen. Duhaut hid in the tall weeds by the shore, while L'Archevêque stood up to attract La Salle's attention.

Upon seeing him, La Salle, who was so far from suspicion that he had not reloaded his gun, called and asked him what had become of Moranget. L'Archevêque answered "with studied insolence" that he was "somewhere along the river." At the same moment Duhaut fired from the grass, and La Salle, shot through the head, fell without uttering a word. His death was instantaneous.[1]

Father Douay stood stock-still with terror, expecting the same fate, but the assassins had had enough of killing, and telling him he need not fear,

[1] Father Anastase Douay in his account, written some time after, says that La Salle lived long enough to receive the last rites of the Church, that he gave him absolution, buried his body, and planted a cross on his grave. Joutel, however, who had an account of the murder from Douay's own lips at the time, says that death was instantaneous, and others in the party — including Tonty, who heard it from the survivors — corroborate him. There is reason to believe that Father Douay made up his story later to avoid the blame of not having buried his leader.

they advanced to where La Salle's body lay, with the slow stream of blood issuing from the temple, and stripped it of its clothes, venting their hatred meanwhile in vile and insulting words. "There thou liest, great Bashaw,[1] there thou liest," cried Liotot several times in derision. They would not even allow Father Douay to bury the body, but left it naked in the bushes, exposed to the wolves, jackals, and buzzards.

So died Robert Cavelier de La Salle, in the forty-seventh year of his age, a victim at last of the treachery which, in one shape or another, had dogged every one of the five thousand miles of his stupendous journeys. His career seemed ended in failure; yet it was only seeming, for while his body lay dishonored, his soul had found, after all the "dangers and difficulties" of the forests, lakes, prairies, and rivers, the treacherous tribes, the bitter colds and burning heats, the famines and fevers of his twenty years of exploration, the honor he had so ardently sought, and which was his forever!

La Salle was no faultless hero, but his faults may be forgiven, for they brought their own punish-

[1] Bashaw — the same word as Shah, the title of the Persian ruler. Used at the time to denote a person of great consequence, or one who thought himself to be such.

Photographed by William Notman & Son, Montreal.

RUINS OF LA SALLE'S HOUSE

These may be seen to-day on the Lower Lachine Road, near Montreal

ment with them, while his virtues deserve the fullest acknowledgment. Joutel, who knew him well in his life, has summed up faults and virtues in the following words: —

"He had a capacity and talent to make his enterprise successful; his constancy and courage, and his extraordinary knowledge of arts and sciences, which rendered him fit for anything, together with an indefatigable body, which made him surmount all difficulties, would have procured a glorious issue to his undertakings, had not all those excellent qualities been counterbalanced by too haughty a behavior, which sometimes made him insupportable, and by a harshness towards those under his command, which drew upon him an implacable hatred, and was at last the cause of his death."

But La Salle's truest, finest epitaph has been written by one who knew him better than his associates in his lifetime knew him, and whose own heroism under trials had given him the right to judge another hero.

"It is easy to reckon up his defects," says Parkman, "but it is not easy to hide from sight the Roman virtues that redeemed them. Beset by a throng of enemies, he stands, like the King of Israel, head and shoulders above them all. He

was a tower of adamant, against whose impregnable front hardship and danger, the rage of man and of the elements, the southern sun, the northern blast, fatigue, famine, and disease, delay, disappointment, and deferred hope emptied their quivers in vain. That very pride, which, Coriolanus-like, declared itself most sternly in the thickest press of foes, has in it something to challenge admiration. Never, under the impenetrable mail of paladin or crusader, beat a heart of more intrepid mettle than within the stoic panoply that armed the breast of La Salle. To estimate aright the marvels of his patient fortitude, one must follow on his track through the vast scene of his interminable journeyings, those thousands of weary miles of forest, marsh and river, where, again and again, in the bitterness of baffled striving, the untiring pilgrim pushed onward towards the goal which he was never to attain. America owes him an enduring memory; for in this masculine figure, cast in iron, she sees the heroic pioneer who guided her to the possession of her richest heritage."

CHAPTER XVII

La Salle Comes to his Own

The murderers, followed by the astonished Indians who had witnessed the crime, went back to La Salle's camp, where were La Salle's brother, the priest Cavelier, Joutel, the other nephew, "the little Cavelier," and the others. No words were spoken at first, but it was clear from the bearing of Duhaut and Liotot that a crime had been committed, for they were uneasy and "puffed up with new-gotten authority."

Father Anastasius and the servant L'Archevêque finally found an opportunity to tell the others in secret what had occurred, warning them at the same time that the murderers would take their lives also if they showed the least resentment.

There was nothing for it but to conceal their horror as best they could. Some of the party were for killing La Salle's assassins, but Cavelier, his brother, opposed it. In the meantime the murderers, who were now the leaders of the party by force of might, after dividing La Salle's possessions

among them, decided to move on, and the whole band, the innocent with the guilty, took up their weary march over the prairies.

Soon after, they were sure they were about to fall into the hands of the Spanish when they saw, coming toward them on horseback from an Indian village, a man dressed after the Spanish fashion, in a blue doublet with sleeves of white fustian, "as it were embroidered," says Joutel, knee breeches and white worsted stockings, and a broad brimmed hat. This seeming cavalier, however, proved to be an Indian, probably one of the fierce Comanches, who, mounted on horses strayed or stolen from the Spanish settlements, had become incomparable riders, and often raided the borders of Mexico, killed the Spaniards, and carried away the spoils of civilization. The French advanced to the village from which this man came, a village belonging to the Cenis, an allied tribe. Some of the Cenis were comparatively advanced in culture, wearing garments of goatskins, dressed and painted, and using fine earthen vessels and well-wrought baskets of their own manufacture. Here too the French found square sword-blades of Spanish make, on the hilts of which were plumes and hawk's bells; in fact, the signs of Spanish intercourse were too many for the peace of mind of the visitors, who

feared nothing so much as being captured by these cruel foreigners and made to spend the remainder of their lives in their mines and quarries.

There were, indeed, Europeans in this and a neighboring village, but they were not Spaniards. One night Joutel, who was in a hut by himself, heard some one moving near his bed. He opened his eyes and saw by the firelight a man who looked like an Indian, perfectly naked, tattooed, with a bow and arrows in his hand. Joutel spoke to the visitor but received no answer. Not liking the appearance of things, he reached for his pistols and firelock, at which the visitor retreated a little, and Joutel, following him into the brighter light near the fire, was surprised to find himself suddenly embraced by the stranger, who announced himself as one of the Frenchmen, by name Ruter, who had strayed away from La Salle on a previous trip. He and his companion, Grollet, who was afraid to come to the village for fear of meeting La Salle, were living near there as savages, having acquired flourishing Indian families and a great renown as warriors. "As for religion," says Joutel quaintly, "they were not troubled with much of it." Neither they nor the Indians could tell the wanderers anything concerning the location of the Mississippi.

Soon quarrels arose among the murderers them-

selves. Hiens, the ex-pirate, who had been finding congenial occupation in leading war-parties of the Cenis, came back and demanded his share of La Salle's effects, as he had decided to stay in this country permanently. Duhaut refused him what he asked. Upon this Hiens drew his pistol and shot Duhaut dead. Ruter, the renegade Frenchman, took Hiens's side, fired upon Liotot and killed him. Joutel laid hold of his gun to defend himself, but Hiens told him not to fear. He reassured Cavelier and Father Anastasius in the same way, and declared that he had not wished La Salle's death and would have prevented it if he could.

The murderers could hardly have met a more deserved fate, though it was from the hands of a man scarcely less brutal and criminal than themselves. They were buried by the others in hastily dug graves, which, as Joutel says, was doing them more honor than they had done La Salle and Moranget. Hiens got his share of the booty, among other things La Salle's scarlet cloak trimmed with gold braid, which the dead leader had worn on formal occasions, such as the service at the Jesuits' chapel at Mackinac on the first (and last) voyage of the *Griffin*. It hurt the others to see this scoundrel swaggering about in it.

After some delay seven of the party, including

the two priests, Joutel, and the little Cavelier, broke away from the Indian village and from the others, and again took up their search for the great river. They had with them six horses and three Indian guides.

Then followed what seemed like Fate's last ironic fling at La Salle's buried ambition — for after months of wandering the little band did what he had failed to do during the two years of his Texas sojourn — they reached the Mississippi!

Their route was by way of the Arkansas River, and here, at the junction of that river with the greater one, they saw a large wooden cross, set up near a small hut on the outskirts of an Indian village. Immediately they fell on their knees in thanksgiving, for it was the emblem of their religion and their actual rescue as well. As they had guessed, there were Frenchmen near — two men left by Tonty, who, brave and faithful as always, had recently led an expedition on his own account from his fort on Starved Rock all the way down the Mississippi to find La Salle.

The travelers received a warm welcome from these men, Couture and De Launey, whom they told of their wanderings and of La Salle's assassination. It was agreed not to tell the Indians of the latter, for fear they would lose respect for the

white men. The Texas party went on up the Mississippi and reached safely Tonty's fort, Fort St. Louis, as La Salle had named it. Tonty was absent on a war against the Iroquois, but his men received the visitors with great joy. The latter did not destroy this joy by any bad news, for, according to an agreement among themselves, they told no one anything of La Salle's death, saying that they had left him in Texas in good health. They salved their consciences by reflecting that this was literally true, as none of them had actually seen him killed. The reasons back of this deception are not quite clear to us to-day, but it is thought that Cavelier wished to get to France to claim some property rights before the news of his brother's death reached there, and also that he knew it would be easier in Canada to borrow goods which he needed on the credit of his brother, if the latter was supposed to be still alive.

They spent the fall and winter at this fort, being royally entertained with fruits of the country, game and cornmeal cakes brought in by the Indian women. Tonty returned before they left, and was overjoyed to hear the false news of La Salle's safety. Cavelier took occasion to borrow more than four thousand livres' worth of goods from him on the strength of a letter of credit given

him by his dead brother, leaving Tonty his own worthless note in exchange. In March, Cavelier and his party departed on the next stage of their long journey. After various adventures and considerable hardship, which was relieved somewhat by the finding of a "kind of manna," as Joutel describes it, "a sweet liquour," drawn from incisions in trees, in which they boiled their Indian corn, thus rendering it "delicious, sweet and of a very agreeable relish," — in other words, our old friend, maple sirup, — they reached Lake Michigan by the Chicago River route. Thence they went to Green Bay, then to Mackinac, and finally reached Montreal in safety. The governor and intendant listened with interest to an account of their "long and painful travels," but they too were deceived by Cavelier in regard to what had happened to La Salle. The voyagers rested in a monastery in Quebec until August, when they set sail for France, reaching Rochelle in October, 1686, having taken four years and three months to make the great circle from France to the Gulf, thence to Canada and back to France.

In their own country they at last communicated the details of the tragedy; but if they had hoped to interest the king in the punishment of the surviving murderers, or in the fate of the forlorn

little colony in Texas, they were disappointed. Louis the Magnificent was also frequently Louis the Stingy, and he declined to spend any more money on the unprofitable venture. But though the monarch left his subjects to their fate, Tonty, who had in the meantime heard of La Salle's death through the men he had left at the mouth of the Arkansas, fitted out another expedition at his own expense and himself led it down the Mississippi and up the Red River to rescue his friend's unfortunate survivors. The Frenchmen with him deserted before he could reach them, however, and he was obliged to turn back. On the way back on the Red River he encountered a flood and had to push through one hundred miles of drowned lands, where they were obliged to sleep on logs laid together and were finally driven to eating their dogs. Tonty said he had never before suffered such hardships.[1]

[1] It is thought by many that Tonty has never received from historians the attention his memory deserves. He was not well rewarded in his lifetime, having for a long time held the commission of captain in the French army without, it is thought, having received any pay except the governorship of Fort St. Louis, with its privilege of a small trade in furs. Tonty joined D'Iberville in 1702 in lower Louisiana, and was sent by that officer to treat with the Chickasaws. His subsequent career is not known, though it is rumored that he died of yellow fever in Mobile.

Soon after, the Spaniards, who had all this time been scouring the coast, at last reached the spot where the women and girls, Squire Barbier and the rakish Marquis de Sablonnière, aimable Father Membré, and the miserable sailors and beggars from Rochelle, had waited anxiously for the relief that never came. They found only ruin and desolation; in the fort were three dead bodies; the Indians had attacked the garrison and killed or taken away the others. This the Spaniards learned from two seeming Indians, in reality L'Archevêque, the servant, and Grollet, the sailor, who were hovering near. Hiens, they said, had been killed by his white comrade, Ruter. They themselves were seized by the Spaniards and thrown into prison.

So failed, for the time being, La Salle's splendid dream of a New France on the lower Mississippi; but the enterprise he had begun was later taken up by Iberville and his son Bienville, and settlements were planted under their direction which

Tonty's contemporaries unite in praising him. Denonville, the governor, said that he was fit for any bold enterprise, and deserved reward from the king. St. Cosmé, who traveled under his escort in 1699, says of him, "He is beloved by all the *voyageurs*. . . . It was with deep regret that we parted from him . . . he is the man who best knows the country . . . he is loved and feared everywhere."

laid the foundations of the new colony of Louisiana.

Louisiana, begun by the French, was turned over to the Spanish, ceded back to the French again, and finally, in 1803, sold by Napoleon I. to the United States. With that purchase the United States acquired full possession of the Mississippi Valley, the greatest in its power to support healthful human life of any river valley in the world. Along its banks to-day is a thriving population of more than four million people who speak a different tongue from that of its early explorers; but the language of heroism is understood by every nation, and particularly by the nation who now honors La Salle as one of the greatest of the pioneers of America.

Printed in the United States of America.

THE following pages contain advertisements of a few of the Macmillan books on kindred subjects

TRUE STORIES OF GREAT AMERICANS

"Should be read by every boy and girl."

This important new series of brief and vivid biographies will give to the young mind an intimate picture of the greatest Americans who have helped to make American history. In each instance the author has been chosen either because he is particularly interested in the subject of the biography, or is connected with him by blood ties and possessed, therefore, of valuable facts. Only those, however, who have shown that they have an appreciation of what makes really good juvenile literature have been entrusted with a volume. In each case they have written with a child's point of view in mind, those events being emphasized which are calculated to appeal to the younger reader, making a full and well-balanced narrative, yet always authentic.

"Most admirable in their construction and purpose. The volumes are interesting and attractive in appearance, graphic in style, and wonderfully inspiring in subject matter, reaching an enviable mark in juvenile literature."—*Philadelphia Public Ledger*.

"Far away from the 'dry as dust' type of biography."
—*San Francisco Bulletin*.

"Simply and attractively told. . . . Especially interesting to children."—*Christian Advocate*.

"An excellent series."—*New York Sun*.

See the following pages for descriptions of the individual books of this series.

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
Publishers **64–66 Fifth Avenue** **New York**

TRUE STORIES OF GREAT AMERICANS

New Illustrated Biographies for Young People

THOMAS A. EDISON — By Francis Rolt-Wheeler

Thomas Alva Edison is the typical American. From boyhood to ripest manhood he has been keen to see an opportunity, and quick to turn that opportunity to a practical use. His genius is peculiar because it is so American. It is not as a scientist that Edison is great, it is not even as an inventor, it is as the master of the practical use of everything he touches that he appears a giant mind of modern times.

Illustrated. $.50

ROBERT FULTON — By Alice C. Sutcliffe

The life of Robert Fulton makes good reading. The story of his belief in and work upon a submarine and his journeys to France and England to lay his plans before the British Government — his steamboat, and the years of study and labor which went toward perfecting it — his paintings — his travels in foreign lands in days when American travelers were few — combine to make one of the most interesting and inspiring books of the series.

"The story is full of interest, and the style fascinating. Few of the 'heroes of peace' attract the youthful reader more than the one chosen by this writer." — *Christian Standard.*

Illustrated. $.50

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN — By E. Lawrence Dudley

As a statesman, diplomat, scientist, philosopher, and man of letters, Benjamin Franklin was the foremost American of his time. The story of his life is an inspiring and stimulating narrative, with all the fascination and interest of Colonial and Revolutionary America, Mr. Dudley has written a book that will find favor with every right-minded boy or girl.

Illustrated. $.50

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Publishers · **64–66 Fifth Avenue** **New York**

TRUE STORIES OF GREAT AMERICANS

The Lives of National Heroes Told in a New Way for Children

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS — By Mildred Stapley

The story of the discovery of America has been told and retold, but always on the same foundation of conjecture and tradition. Mildred Stapley has consulted new and recently discovered sources of contemporary information, and the history of Columbus' voyages is revised and corrected, though the romance and excitement still glow through the record of his achievements, and his fame as a daring navigator remains an example of courage and unequalled valor.

Illustrated. $.50

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH — By Rossiter Johnson

The adventurous Captain who founded Virginia lived the life of a typical hero of romance — Soldier of Fortune in America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, pirate, slave, and friend of princes. He was an able executive and a man of energy and capacity.

"The picturesque story is one of the bright spots in the somewhat dreary early American history, and all children should know it." — *New York Sun.*

Illustrated. $.50

WILLIAM PENN — By Rupert S. Holland

The life of William Penn is of especial interest and value because the events of his career are closely related to American and English history at a time when America was separating herself from her parent country and shaping her destiny as an independent Republic. Mr. Holland presents the great American as a man of noble character and a fearless champion of liberty.

Illustrated. $.50

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Publishers 64-66 Fifth Avenue New York

TRUE STORIES OF GREAT AMERICANS

New Illustrated Biographies for Young People

ROBERT E. LEE — By Bradley Gilman

Robert E. Lee ranks with the greatest of all English-speaking military leaders. Bradley Gilman has told the story of his life so as to reveal the greatness and true personality of a man "who has left an enduring memory of the highest idealism."

"The story of Lee's life is sympathetically told and with a fine appreciation of those traits in his character that have commanded universal respect."
— *Review of Reviews.*

Illustrated. $.50

DAVY CROCKETT — By William C. Sprague

No fictitious tale of perils and adventures could surpass the true story of Davy Crockett, pioneer. His life and adventures are closely bound up with the greatest events of American history. He was an explorer, and scout in the Indian wars, and first to open up much of the new territory beyond the Alleghanies; he was killed fighting under the lone-star flag of Texas at the siege of the Alamo in San Antonio.

Illustrated. $.50

NATHAN HALE — By Jean Christie Root

There is hardly another story in the whole range of American history which contains so much of inspiration and splendid heroism as that of Nathan Hale.

"There is more than the work of a gifted biographer here. There is a message."—*New York World.*

Illustrated. $.50

NEW VOLUMES

GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER	**By F. S. Dillenbaugh**
JOHN PAUL JONES	**By L. Frank Tooker**
GEORGE WASHINGTON	**By W. H. Rideing**
U. S. GRANT	**By F. E. Lovell Coombs**
ABRAHAM LINCOLN	**By Daniel E. Wheeler**
LA SALLE	**By Louise S. Hasbrouck**
DANIEL BOONE	**By Lucile Gulliver**
LAFAYETTE	**By Martha F. Crow**

OTHER VOLUMES BEING PREPARED

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Publishers **64-66 Fifth Avenue** **New York**

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

form 410

OCT 16 1916

I Part
372 A

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

form 410

OCT 16 1916

I Perc
3 12 A

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

form 410

OCT 16 1916

1 Port
3 Ea #1

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
REFERENCE DEPARTMENT

This book is under no circumstances to be taken from the Building

form 410

OCT 16 1916

I Peter
3:12 #1